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“SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME.”

# EUCHARISTIC LILIES

YOUTHFUL LOVERS OF JESUS

IN THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT

BY

HELEN MAERY

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*Archbishop of New York.*

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TO  
Little Children  
AND  
All Who Love Jesus  
IN  
The Holy Eucharist

“SUFFER THE LITTLE ONES TO COME UNTO ME  
AND FORBID THEM NOT”



## FOREWORD

**T**HE wind is tempered to the shorn lamb.  
The sparrows are fed, and the lilies  
are clothed, though they toil not,  
neither do they spin; for He Who made  
them has care of them.

And He Who made us, also has care of us. And sweet it is to see, in the course of events, how lovingly Divine Providence supplies the wants of every age. Whatsoever the need, His beneficence meets it; in wonderful ways, too, that compel our gratitude as well as our admiration.

In these restless times of ours, when the spirit of the world seeks to draw souls away from the Fountain of Living Waters, Holy Church aims to lead them to the Source.

She repeats the Divine Master's invitation, "Come to Me and I will refresh you"; and she opens the way wherein His sacred promise is to be fulfilled. Hence the Vicar of Christ, Our Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X, now so blessedly reigning, bids a return to the practice of the early Christians, who daily partook of the Bread of Life. His solicitude includes also the lambs of the flock, that they may be firmly established in righteousness before their hearts are sullied by evil, or their minds poisoned by false principles and worldliness. For the Eucharist was to be, not only a memorial of Christ's love for us, but the bond of union between Him and our souls; a union which was to endure all the years and be perfected in life everlasting.

The history of the Servants of God affords many examples, which Holy Church jealously cherishes, showing how wonderfully little children can partake in this happy

union. Of these, a few are here gathered together, sweet Eucharistic Lilies, which will delight and instruct God's little ones, and possibly interest their elders, if indeed these are not put to the blush at seeing such marvels of courage and love in the lives of mere children.

May these Eucharistic flowers, then, exhale their sweetness, and be the means of bringing many other young hearts to the garden of the Lord, Whose divine words were never more insistent or more tender than when He said to those who, through reverence for His Divine Person, would deter the little ones from approaching Him: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not."



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POPE PIUS X.



## THE CHILDREN'S POPE

DEAR HOLY FATHER! How your little ones love to greet you, and call you their very own! Yes, you are their very own. And is there a title dearer to your heart than that of The Children's Pope? The little children think not; and who is there that would dispute their claim?

The great achievements of your extraordinary reign, or the mandates of thunder that have pealed from the Vatican, have never held the world in such compelling wonder, as the tender thought that bade the little ones be fed with the Heavenly Manna. And whence has issued this inspired command, except from one knowing

the power of innocence and love, and reckoning with Him Who said: "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, and forbid them not"?

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It was evening of a sunny day. His Holiness had been very busy from early morning; and now, as the fragrant breezes were pleasant and winsome, he strolled out through the Vatican gardens for a short hour of rest. The birds were chirping soft evening ditties; the flowers were sprinkling their perfume; the slanting sunbeams flickered among the leaves, while the cool zephyrs fondly caressed the great Pontiff's brow. Nature was offering her gladdest welcome to the Vicar of Christ; yet, his look was sad.

"What is it, Holy Father?" asked one of his attendants. "Some great affair of state, some new affliction to the Church, perhaps, is pressing upon you?"

Slowly the Pope replied:

"Not that, no, not that. My little children, my dear little children—I must do something for them; the poor starvelings, they must be fed." Then Pius X unfolded the plan he had in his mind about the First Communion of children, and very soon that plan was published to the world in a Decree that has proved him to be truly "The Children's Pope."

#### THE DECREE "QUAM SINGULARI"

The pages of the Gospel clearly witness to the extraordinary affection shown by Christ to little children when He was on earth. It was His delight to be in their company; He was wont to lay His hands upon them, to embrace them, to bless them. And He was indignant at their being turned away by His disciples, whom He rebuked in these grave words: "Suffer

the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God." (Mark X : 14.) He showed sufficiently how highly He esteemed their innocence and candor of soul, when calling unto Him a little child, He said to His disciples: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven. And he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth Me." (Matt. XVIII: 3, 4, 5.)

Mindful of this, the Catholic Church, from its very earliest beginnings, took care to bring little children to Christ by Eucharistic Communion, which it was accustomed to administer even to infants. This took place at Baptism, as was prescribed in almost all the ancient Rituals

down to the thirteenth century, and in some places lasted longer; among the Greeks and Easterns it still obtains. In order, however, to remove the danger that infants should reject especially the bread, the custom prevailed from the beginning of administering the Eucharist to them under the species of wine only.

Nor was it at Baptism alone, but very frequently afterwards that the infants were refreshed by the Divine Food. For it was the custom of some churches to give the Eucharist to the little ones immediately after the clergy, and elsewhere after the Communion of the adults to give them the fragments remaining over.

This custom then grew obsolete in the Latin Church, and children began to take their place at the Holy Table only when they had a certain use of dawning reason, and some knowledge of this August Sacrament. This new discipline which had

already been accepted by some local synods, was confirmed by the solemn sanction of the Fourth General Council of the Lateran, held in 1215, by the promulgation of the famous 21st Canon, whereby Sacramental Confession and Holy Communion are prescribed to the faithful, after they have attained the age of reason: "Every one of the faithful of both sexes, after they come to the years of discretion, shall, in private, faithfully confess all their sins, at least once a year, to their own priest; and take care to fulfil to the best of their power the penance enjoined on them, receiving reverently, at least at Easter, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, unless, perhaps, by the counsel of their own priest, for some reasonable cause, they judge it proper to abstain from it for a time."

The Council of Trent (Sess. XXI, on Communion, ch. 4), without in any way

disapproving the ancient discipline of administering the Eucharist to little children before they had the use of reason, confirmed the Lateran Decree, and anathematized those who should not conform to it: "If anyone denieth, that all and each of Christ's faithful of both sexes are bound, when they have attained to the years of discretion, to communicate every year, at least at Easter, in accordance with the precept of Holy Mother Church, let him be anathema." (Sess. XIII, on the Holy Eucharist, ch. 8, can. 9.)

In virtue, then, of the Lateran Decree just quoted and still in force, the faithful of Christ, on reaching the years of discretion, are bound by the obligation of going to the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at least once a year.

In fixing this age of reason, or of discretion, however, not a few errors and deplorable abuses have been introduced in

the course of time. For there were those who considered that a different age of discretion was to be fixed for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and for the reception of the Holy Eucharist. For Penance they considered that the age of discretion was that at which wrong could be distinguished from right, and therefore at which sin could be committed. But, for the Eucharist, they held that a more advanced age was required at which a fuller knowledge of the truths of faith and a more mature preparation of soul could be obtained. And so, according to the different local customs or opinions of men, the age for the first reception of the Eucharist was fixed at ten or twelve years in some places, at fourteen years, and even more, in others, and in the meantime children or youths not having attained the prescribed age were forbidden to approach the Eucharistic Communion.

This custom, whereby, under the pretext of safeguarding the honor due to the August Sacrament, the faithful are kept away from it, became the cause of many evils. For it came to pass that the innocence of the age of childhood, torn from the embrace of Christ, was not nourished by the sap of the interior life; whence this also followed: that youth, deprived of its all-powerful protection, surrounded by so many snares, on losing its innocence, fell headlong into vice before it had tasted of the Sacred Mysteries. Now, even if the First Communion is preceded by more diligent instruction, and a careful Sacramental Confession—which is not everywhere the case—nevertheless, the loss of baptismal innocence is ever to be regretted, a loss which, had the Eucharist been received in more tender years, might perhaps have been avoided.

No less to be condemned is the custom

existing in many places of forbidding Sacramental Confession to children who are not yet admitted to the Holy Table, or of not giving them absolution. Whence it comes to pass that, caught in the toils of sins possibly grave, they may long remain in great danger.

But what is most serious is that in some places children who have not yet been admitted to their First Communion are not even allowed, when in imminent danger of death, to be strengthened by the Holy Viaticum, and at their death are carried to their graves like infants, and so are not assisted by the Church's suffrages.

Such is the harm done by those who insist, more than is right, on making extraordinary preparation precede the First Communion, probably not noticing that such kind of precaution has its roots in Jansenistic errors, maintaining that the Most Holy Eucharist is a reward, not the

remedy of human weakness. And yet the contrary was certainly held by the Council of Trent, when it taught that the Eucharist is "the antidote whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from deadly sins" (Sess. XIII, "On the Holy Eucharist," ch. 2), which doctrine has recently been more emphatically insisted upon by the Sacred Congregation of the Council in the Decree of December 20, 1905, whereby access to daily Communion was thrown open to all, old and young, two conditions only being imposed: the state of grace and a right intention.

Certainly, seeing that in ancient times the remains of the Sacred Species were distributed to little children, there appears to be no sound reason why an extraordinary preparation should be demanded from little ones, who, living in the most happy condition of their first candor and innocence, stand in the greatest need of

that mystical food on account of the many snares and dangers of the present time.

\* \* \* \* \*

From all this, we gather that the age of discretion for Communion is that at which the child is able to distinguish Eucharistic bread from common and material bread, as to be able devoutly to approach the altar. Consequently no perfect knowledge of the things of faith is required, since some elements alone suffice, that is, a certain knowledge; nor is the full use of reason required, since the incipient use is enough, that is, a certain use of reason.

Wherefore the deferring of Communion, and the fixing of a more advanced age for receiving it, is to be absolutely condemned, and the Apostolic See has many times condemned it. Thus Pius IX, of happy memory, in Cardinal Antonelli's letter to the Bishops of France, March 12, 1866,

strongly disapproved of the custom, growing in many dioceses, of postponing the First Communion to a more mature and fixed age. The Sacred Congregation of the Council, on March 15, 1851, corrected a chapter of the Provincial Council of Rouen, whereby children were forbidden to approach Holy Communion before the age of twelve. In a similar way did this Sacred Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacrament act in the Strasburg case on March 25, 1910, in which the point was raised as to whether children of twelve or of fourteen might be admitted to Holy Communion, and the answer given was: "Boys and girls, as soon as they have reached the years of discretion, that is, the use of reason, are to be admitted to the Holy Table."

Having given mature consideration to all these points, and in order that the above-mentioned abuses should be entirely

removed, and that children from their very tenderest years should adhere to Jesus Christ, live His life, and find protection from the dangers of corruption, this Sacred Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacraments, at a General Session held on July 15, 1910, has judged it opportune to lay down the following rules concerning the First Communion of Children, to be observed everywhere:

I. The age of discretion, alike for Confession and for Holy Communion, is the age at which the child begins to use its reason, that is about its seventh year, or later or even sooner. From that time begins the obligation of satisfying the two-fold precept of Confession and Communion.

II. A full and perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine is not necessary for first Confession nor for First Communion. But the child must afterwards gradually

learn the whole Catechism in the measure of its capacity.

III. The religious knowledge required in a child, in order that it should fittingly prepare itself for First Communion, is that whereby it understands according to its capacity the mysteries of faith necessary as the means of salvation, and distinguishes the Eucharistic bread, so as to approach the Holy Eucharist with such devotion as befits its age.

IV. The obligation of the precept of Confession and Communion, binding the child, falls principally upon those who have charge of it, that is upon the parents, confessor, teachers, and parish priest. To the father, however, or whoever occupies his place, and to the confessor, it belongs according to the Roman Catechism, to admit the child to its First Communion.

V. Once or several times in the year, let parish priests take care to announce and

hold a general Communion of children and to admit thereto, not only new communicants, but also others who, with the consent of their parents or of their confessor, as above stated, have already previously partaken at the sacred altar. For both alike let some days of instruction and preparation precede.

VI. Those who have charge of children must take the utmost care that after their First Communion the said children should approach the holy table very often, and, if it be possible, even daily, as Jesus Christ and our Holy Mother Church desire it, and that they should do so with such devotion of soul as their age allows. Moreover, let those who are in charge remember the most grave duty incumbent upon them of seeing that the children are present at the public lessons of Catechism, or of supplying religious instructions in some other way.

VII. The custom of not admitting children to Confession, or of never absolving them, although they have attained the use of reason, is to be absolutely disapproved. Wherefore, local Ordinaries will take care that it is entirely abolished, even by the invoking of the remedies of Canon Law.

VIII. The refusal to administer Viaticum and Extreme Unction to children who have attained the use of reason, and their burial with the rites reserved to infants, are utterly detestable abuses. Let the local Ordinaries take severe measures against those who do not abandon this custom.

Our Most Holy Lord Pius X, in an audience on the seventh of the current month, approved all these decisions sanctioned by the Cardinals of this Sacred Congregation, and commanded this present decree to be published and promulgated. He has commanded each of the Ordinaries

to make known this Decree, not only to the parish priests and clergy, but also to the people, to whom he wills that it should be read every year, at the time of the Paschal precept, in the vulgar tongue. The Ordinaries themselves, at the end of each period of five years, will have in the returns of the diocese to render an account to the Holy See of the observance of this Decree.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome at the palace of the same Sacred Congregation, on the 8th day of August, 1910.

D. CARD. FERRATA, *Prefect.*

PH. GIUSTINI, *Secretary.*



BLESSED IMELDA'S FIRST COMMUNION.



## BLESSED IMELDA

### AT HOME

**B**LESSED IMELDA was an angelic child very dear to the Heart of Our Divine Lord; so dear, in fact, that He worked a most wonderful miracle to make her happy. But before describing the marvelous favor granted to this sweet child, we must tell her life story.

In baptism Imelda was called Magdalén. She was born in Bologna, a city of Italy, in the year 1324, of the noble and ancient Lambertini family. Her parents were as noted for their Christian virtues as for their nobility and wealth. They were educated and accomplished, and in every

way worthy of the high esteem and admiration in which they were held.

For long ages before and after this period the Lambertini was a noted name. Some of the valiant line distinguished themselves by great exploits and services rendered to their country; others, by their learning and zeal in the Church. One of this illustrious line became the great Pope, Benedict XIV.

“God did not reserve for little Magdalén,” says one of her biographers, “a glory as brilliant in the eyes of the world; but He poured down upon her gifts so rare, even from her infancy, that she seemed to be an angel in a mortal body. Her mind opened immediately to the teachings of Christian truths.

“If any accident or pain came to disturb the serenity of her countenance and cause infantine tears, it sufficed to tell her about Jesus and Mary, to relate stories from the

Gospels or lives of the Saints, in order to captivate her attention at once, dry her tears and restore her smiles."

Little children are generally full of caprice. What pleases them one moment displeases them the next; their moods are as changeable as the wind, their love of play alone being the one thing unchangeable. Obedience for them is often difficult, restraint of any kind exceedingly irksome, especially when their inclinations have been freely indulged.

Favored Magdalen needed scarcely a word of caution or correction. She was sedate, obedient, gentle, and grave in her deportment, and most faithful in the little duties assigned to her. She could be trusted anywhere and at all times.

What most children like best, noise and excitement, little Magdalen disliked most. She was never so well pleased as when she could retire into her oratory and there

spend her time decorating her little altar, or praying to Our Lady and performing various acts of piety.

The thought of the Child Jesus was before her mind in everything she did. How would Jesus, the Son of Mary, pray? How would He work? How would He do whatever His blessed Mother and dear St. Joseph wanted Him to do?—these were the questions that occupied her thoughts, and by means of which she grew in wisdom and grace before God and men.

It might naturally be expected that so angelic a child would be greatly loved and petted. And so she was. Yet the most loving and lavish attentions never caused the slightest change in her admirable disposition.

There were some, too, who tried to make her vain about her dress, her beauty, or the riches of her family. Little Magdalen took no interest in such topics. The simpler her

attire, the better she liked it. But everything about her had to be exquisitely neat and clean; for she thought the Child Jesus would not be pleased with the least spot or disorder, since He wishes the heart to be perfectly pure, free from the least stain of sin.

She thought, too, that by having fewer clothes, and these plain and simple, she would have more to give to the poor. Her parents were very charitable and gave generously of their abundance; but they taught their little girl to make sacrifices in order to give more to the poor and distressed.

Never was lesson learned more quickly. So great, indeed, was the child's compassion for those who had little, that she would have given away everything if not prevented. Her prettiest toys were joyfully carried to poor children, especially to the sick, with whom she loved to stay and talk. She

could remain long hours, telling them about Bethlehem, where Our Saviour was born; Nazareth, where He worked in St. Joseph's carpenter shop; and Calvary where he died on a cross to save us. All marvelled at the wisdom of this child, who had scarcely reached, what is ordinarily called, the age of reason.

#### AT SCHOOL

Before Magdalen Lambertini was able to speak distinctly, she could recite the prayers said in her pious family, and also repeat long portions of sermons heard in the Church.

In the House of God, even when so young as to be carried in the arms of her nurse, she was always perfectly silent, and during the services kept her eyes fixed upon the altar or the speaker.

On account of her aptitude, her education

was begun very early. Though her parents taught her the rudiments, they also procured private tutors for her. She was allowed, moreover, to attend school, because competition with others quickens the intelligence, and tends to keep up a lively interest in studies.

Magdalen needed no incentive to make her diligent. She developed so rapidly as to be able to follow classes several years in advance of her age; and, if any fault could be found with her, it was that of being too fond of study.

The attention she gave to her books, however, did not diminish her fervor. On awaking in the morning, she offered her heart to God. During her work she was so recollected as to seem always enjoying the presence of God; as soon as her tasks were ended, she stole away softly to her little oratory, and when called to come and play she answered that she would rather stay

with God and talk to Him. Nevertheless, when called again she obeyed calmly, and was pleasant with everyone.

The teachers were glad when they saw her among the children. Her sweet temper and kind words always worked magic in quieting the restless, or restoring peace that had been disturbed by petty quarrels; and her little wise lessons, given in the most artless way, were still remembered long after she had passed from their midst, and carried with them a charm that none could forget.

When she bore away the prizes no one was jealous, nor was she elated; often she would hand over to a disappointed child the premium she had earned by her assiduity and self-conquest. Such acts of self-sacrifice always brought to her soul new graces and fond caresses from Our Blessed Lord. The secrets of love He whispered to her heart were far sweeter to her than any earthly consolation. It did not cost her

too much to part with what is considered so pleasing to human nature, because she had learned the lesson of self-denial and early realized the value of sacrifice. The Saints know how to earn good gifts.

#### IN THE CLOISTER

This child apostle had fixed ideas about her future. She realized that nothing in time can be compared to a happy eternity, and that to save one's soul is the only important thing in life.

She understood, too, how different is the spirit of the world from that of God, and her heart yearned for an asylum where she might renounce the world and belong entirely to Jesus Christ. She therefore entreated her parents to take her to some convent.

In those days it was not very unusual to receive children into the cloister; so

Magdalen's parents granted her request. Though they loved her tenderly, they made a generous offering of their child, deeming it a great honor, should their precious one be chosen to be a Spouse of Christ.

Accordingly, when hardly ten years old, little Magdalen was permitted to wear the dress of a nun. The convent in which she was placed was a short distance from Rome, in the town called Valdipietra. The name of the convent was St. Magdalen. It had existed several centuries before the noble daughter of the Lambertini came to add lustre to its fair name, and had always been renowned for its fervor.

The religious at St. Magdalen's followed the rule of St. Augustine. In succeeding years the convent passed to religious who observed the rule of St. Dominic; hence, both Communities, Augustinian and Dominican, now claim the Blessed Imelda; the former, because she was clothed in their

habit; the latter, because they possess her relics.

The religious of Valdipietra received little Magdalen with joy. Notwithstanding her youth, they could not resist her pleadings to be clothed in the holy habit. Great was the child's satisfaction and joy, therefore, when she found herself robed as a Spouse of Christ, and heard herself addressed as Sister Imelda.

The religious vesture did not bind for the future; and there could be no profession of vows until the canonical age had been attained. But the Divine Lover of souls, Who had set His seal upon this beloved child, heard her heart's vows, and bound her to Himself by ties that were never to be broken. She now belonged to Jesus, and He was her only Beloved. That thought never left her mind.

From the record previously mentioned, the following extract is taken:

"Children of her age admitted to the monastery were subjected to only part of the rule. The youthful Sister Imelda wished to observe it in its entirety. She was present at all the exercises of the Community, the most exact, the most modest, the most obedient. She chastised her delicate body with severe penances, as if she had had great sins to expiate, for she desired to resemble Jesus Crucified; in brief, the most ancient of the Sisters looked upon her as their model."

#### IMELDA'S DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Continues the chronicle: But the most touching of all was her marvellous devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. Knowing that Jesus is there—Jesus the only object of her tender love—she felt a happiness that never weakened in passing entire

hours before the Holy Tabernacle. In those delightful conversations with our Divine Lord, the time seemed short to her.

Every morning she assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, during which her soul was entirely absorbed in meditation upon the august mysteries. Her recollection and tears manifested her fervor. But it was especially at the moment of Holy Communion, when the Sisters left their places to go and kneel at the Holy Table, that our little Saint could not hold back the flood of tears. And how she desired to receive her King, to have Him for her all, and to be all His! No sacrifice would cost her anything, if she could only enjoy this great happiness. But her age debarred her from it.

In the meantime, at the recreation hour, she would go to one or the other of those who had had the favor of receiving Holy Communion that morning, to converse with

her about this divine mystery. "Oh! I beg of you," she would say in the simplicity and ardor of her love, "explain to me how one can receive Jesus into her heart and not die."

No longer able to control her desires, Imelda besought her confessor to permit her to approach the Holy Table. It was the custom at that time in Italy, not to admit children to their First Holy Communion before the age of fourteen. The priest did not think he could make an exception in her favor. He contented himself, then, with encouraging the child in her holy desires, without permitting her to realize them. Imelda submitted, but great was her sacrifice.

#### THE MIRACLE

The beautiful story of Imelda's First Communion also comes from the ancient chronicle.

God, Who is pleased to enter the heart of the humble and pure, it says, did not delay much longer to recompense the love which filled the heart of His saintly child.

The feast of the Ascension was to end her trial. It was the year 1332. Imelda was now eleven years old. Thinking that on such a beautiful day her confessor might relax his rigor, she overcame her timidity and repeated her request with more earnestness than ever. It was all in vain.

But what is the will of man before that of God? One can, it is true, prevent a soul from approaching Him; but can God be prevented from uniting Himself to one whom He would? Did not the Lord Himself say in the Holy Scriptures that those who sought Him would surely find Him? And that He would load with His benefits those who hungered for them?

With heart bruised by this late refusal, Imelda repaired to the convent church to

assist at Mass and unite her sacrifice to that of the adorable Victim.

When the moment of Holy Communion arrived, all the religious, happy and in deep recollection, knelt at the Holy Table.

Alone, Imelda remained in the back of the church. There, on her knees, her face buried in her hands, she gave free vent to her tears. She complained lovingly to her Divine Spouse of His remaining deaf to her prayers, and conjured Him, with renewed intensity, not to defer satisfying her longings.

“O Jesus!” she sighed, “O my Heavenly Spouse! do You wish Your little servant to be consumed by the ardor of her desires without ever gratifying them? Is it because I am only a child?

“But the religious, my mothers, have often told me about Your predilection for children. And did You not also say to Your Apostles: *Suffer the little children*

*to come unto Me, and forbid them not?* Why, then, do you not permit *me* to come to You? I am a child, I love You most dearly. O give me only a crumb of that Bread of Life and I shall be satisfied. But if You judge me to be unworthy, then let me die, for I cannot live without You."

Our Divine Lord could not resist an appeal like this.

As Imelda continued to weep and pray, a Host miraculously escaped from the ciborium, arose in the air, passed over the grating of the choir, and stopped, without any hand holding it, over the head of the child. Imelda, on her knees, her eyes fixed on the Sacred Host, adored her God so near her, and seemed united to the Angels in their attitude of respect and love.

The Sisters could scarcely believe their own eyes; however, the miracle continuing, they informed the priest. He approached with the paten, and the Sacred Host, until

that moment stationary, descended of Itself upon the paten. No longer doubting the will of God, the priest took the miraculous Host and gave it to Imelda.

#### HER FIRST AND LAST COMMUNION

And now concludes the wondrous story: At last her desires were fulfilled; and, as she could not bear such joy in her mortal body, she sank, as it were plunged in profound contemplation; like the tiny flower bending under the drops of heavenly dew, too weak to bear their weight.

With hands joined upon her breast, eyes gently closed, Imelda appeared as if fallen into a sweet sleep. To see her partly closed lips, livid but framing a heavenly smile, one could fancy her murmuring the words of the Canticle: "My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved. I have found Him Whom my soul loveth. I have found Him and will not let Him go."

Long the Sisters gazed upon her in silent admiration. They could not cease looking at her and praising God.

Having finished their Office, seeing her still prostrate and immovable, they felt a vague disquiet. They called her, they coaxed her, they urged her, they commanded her to rise. She, always so prompt and obedient hitherto, this time obeyed not. She did not hear. They lifted her up—she had passed away! Yes! She had gone to Our Lord, and that, on the day, and at the hour, of her First Holy Communion. O, happy death! O, happy child!

This, then, dear children, is the story of the Blessed Imelda whom our Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X, has chosen as the special patron of young Communicants. Try to imitate her love of Our Lord and her desire to be united to Him; and though you may not be favored as she was during life, you will, in the end, be her companion

in heavenly glory. Every day pray to Blessed Imelda, entreating her to obtain for you the grace always to receive the Holy Eucharist worthily, and at the hour of your death to be strengthened by the Bread of Life, the Heavenly Manna, the Holy Viaticum, the ever adorable and holy Sacrament of the Altar.



SAINT TARCISIUS.



## TARCISIUS

Boy-MARTYR OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

**A** ROMAN boy, lithe, comely, fair,  
With thoughtful eyes and sunkissed hair,  
Whose loyal heart to Christ he gave  
And pledged the service of the brave,  
Is the Saint of the Holy Eucharist.

He lived when Rome in pagan pride  
The faith of Christ in hate denied ;  
When all her vaunted power and might  
Were waged in ceaseless, cruel fight  
Against the God of the Eucharist.

And sweet to say, as day by day  
The Martyrs suffered in the fray,  
The Bread Divine their strength renewed ;  
Their souls grew fearless when bedewed  
With grace bestowed in the Eucharist.

Tarcisius knelt one gala morn,  
Within his breast a longing born,  
Upon his lips a loving sigh—  
“To-day the holy martyrs die  
For Christ, the God of the Eucharist.”

“Father,” he spoke, and deep desire  
Kindled his eyes with holy fire,  
“Would I might carry the Host away  
To those who die for Christ to-day—  
The Host of the Holy Eucharist.”

“Too young you are,” the priest replied,  
“Your eager wish must be denied;  
To face the rabble were a task  
For men; you know not what you ask.  
Yet, blest be your love of the Eucharist!”

“My youth,” Tarcisius cried, “will be  
The best protection unto me.  
O let me take the Bread Divine,  
Safe in these feeble hands of mine  
Shall be the God of the Eucharist.”

“ From lips of Infants often flows  
The wisdom God Himself bestows ”:  
Thus mused the priest, who stooped and placed  
Upon the hands outstretched in haste,  
    The Hidden God of the Eucharist.

“ My child, forget not Whom you bear;  
Relent not once a constant care,  
Nor let a pagan hand profane,  
From you this priceless Treasure gain—  
    The God of the Holy Eucharist.”

“ Rather than I my trust betray,  
My life shall end this very day,”  
Tarcisius said. A wondrous joy  
Transfused the fair and holy boy  
    Now holding the Bread of the Eucharist.

Sweet were his thoughts, too sweet to stay  
The joyous hour that winged away.  
Soon, soon, his journey would be o'er—  
Would it could last forevermore,  
    And he be the guard of the Eucharist.

A shout, a cry, his reverie broke;  
A voice in coarsest accents spoke:  
“Are you a Christian dog?” it said.  
Tarcisius raised his golden head,  
“A follower of Christ I am.”

“What do you, boy, so closely hold  
Within your tunic’s secret fold?”  
“I pray you let me pass,” he cried.  
“What Christians ask must be denied”:  
Thus spoke the leader rough and loud.

“Yield, Christian lad, or else you rue  
The day you met this soldier-crew.  
What! You resist? And dare you plead?  
Your stubbornness doth stand in need  
Of Roman discipline, I trow.”

Defenceless, pent on every side,  
Tarcisius stood, while the ruffians tried  
Which had the stronger, surer aim,  
To bruise, to loosen, and to maim  
The claspèd hands upon his breast.

The cruel stones fell thick and fast  
Until the martyr-boy at last  
Sank to the earth; upon his breast  
His faithful hands still closely pressed,  
Protecting there the Eucharist.

How still he lay! His face, how bright!  
The pagans fled from the wondrous sight;  
While tender hands of Christians bore  
The little lad, who, evermore,  
Is called The Saint of the Eucharist.

## LITTLE NELLIE OF HOLY GOD,

### THE LITTLE VIOLET OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

“I want Holy God. Oh! I wonder when He will come!

I want Him to come into my heart; I’m longing for Him.”

**H**ow many times—only the Angels can tell—these words were lisped by baby Nellie Horgan, called by her school companions, “The Little Violet of the Holy Eucharist.”

And when at last her longing to receive Our Divine Saviour in Holy Communion was about to be satisfied, she could say nothing, scarcely, all the day but, “I will hab Holy God in my heart, I will hab Holy God in my heart.” This sweet mode of

expression caused the dear child also to be called, "Little Nellie of Holy God." Under the latter title, a charming sketch has been published by a priest of Cork. You will want to read it. It is most delightful. In the meantime, snatches of the story of that little Irish Child Saint will doubtless be pleasing to you.

Nellie's dear good mother died when her precious child was less than four years old. Her father was a soldier and away from home all the time. Being also very poor, he placed his children in charitable institutions, where they would be well cared for; the two boys with the Brothers, and the two little girls at St. Finbar's, an industrial school conducted by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Sunday's Well.

Nellie, the youngest, was very delicate and soon became an invalid; she was, in fact, a real victim; yet so patient and loving, that all hearts were drawn to her.

Though so young, Nellie was remarkably pious, and showed a wonderful instinct for spiritual things. Her questions made others think deeply for suitable answers, and not a few were more than perplexing.

She had been at St. Finbar's only a few weeks when she knew by heart the morning and night prayers, the acts of faith, hope, and charity, and other devotions in use at the Convent.

When she said her rosary, as she did every day, lying upon her couch of pain, she kissed each bead, and said the Hail Mary slowly and distinctly and with fervent affection.

She knew also many of the mysteries of our holy religion and much about the life of Our Blessed Lord. Anything concerning the Child Jesus and His sweet Mother interested her intensely. Repetition never tired her, and she would relate to her visitors whatever she had heard from

the dear Sisters or nurses about Holy God.

Many pretty things are told of her great faith and confidence. One day in passing a statue of Our Lady, she reached up to take the globe in the hand of the Divine Infant, saying at the same time, "If you give me your ball, Holy God, I will give you my pretty shoeses." (She was very fond of the light new shoes they had given her.) Nurse caught back the child's hand saying, "Why, Nellie, you could not have that." Nellie, quietly passed on with, "Him could gib it me if Him wanted to."

She asked Holy God for whatever she desired. If He granted her prayer she was not surprised; if He did not, she was always satisfied, because she wanted only what He wanted.

The Reverend Mother once told Nellie to ask Holy God to send her some money, for she needed it very badly. The child

replied: "Him knows it an' dat's enough." It seems the money came.

One of the most interesting chapters in her little "Life" is "Nellie's Act of Contrition." The story in substance is this: One day Nellie did not come in when the bell rang for supper and the girls were delayed on her account. Sister said to her, "Nellie, you must be a good child and not keep the children late for supper."

"Dem could go in if dem wanted to," was Nellie's reply.

Sister told her no, they could not leave her out alone; and now, she continued, "are you sorry for keeping them late?"

"Yes, I am sorry," Nellie answered.

"If you are, tell Holy God."

Instantly Nellie was on her knees, saying: "Holy God, I am vewy, vewy, sorwy for keeping de girls late for supper; forgib me, make me a good child, an' bless me an' my Mudders."

Among many incidents that occurred, showing a very beautiful trait in little Nellie, was this: The dear sufferer had been given some cough drops to relieve her great distress when attacks of coughing came on. Her nurse had to take the first; then her sister must have some, and she herself was happy with the few that remained. In fact, she was so generous that when her visitors brought her little delicacies, some one always had to share them with her, or she would not care for them at all. Later on, to please her kind friends, she would partake of a little to show her gratitude, but, through self-denial, would take no more. Even were it just one strawberry, she would put it up to nurse's mouth, saying, "You take one bite an' I'll take anudder."

Though little Nellie was affectionate and kind, and playful at times, she often had spells of crying that lasted a long time,

especially when told she must sit still. This looked like a peevish disposition, and the Sisters felt they must try to correct it. It was only when a girl in the dormitory reported that little Nellie cried most of the night, that something serious was apprehended; so the little sufferer was removed to the Infirmary. Examination discovered that her spine was greatly curved. Now they knew how much the poor child must have suffered in trying to sit still, and all were impressed that her efforts at self-conquest came from a source they had not suspected, namely, heroic patience for love of Our Lord.

The little sufferer never complained, though she must have endured real torture. Diversions that generally please children had no attraction for her; but if any one read a pious story or talked about Our Lord's sufferings, she was all interest.

Another of little Nellie's beautiful traits

was her perfect truthfulness. When reproached for any fault, she never sought to deny it; if they told her she did wrong, she tried to believe it, and to make satisfaction for it. To show how very truthful she was, the following instance may be cited: it was when little Nellie was very near her death. One of the Sisters had her in her arms, rocking her. Thinking the darling asleep, she said to the nurse: "How happy this child is! She will go straight to heaven, for she never committed a sin." Nellie suddenly started up, saying, "Oh! yes, Mudder, I did. I told a lie once."

The Divine Lover of little children rewarded her with very special favors. According to her own words, He paid her a visit at her bedside. "Him did come an' stan' dere," she said, pointing to the side of her cot.

When it was hinted by the nurse that Nellie might die soon, she assured them the

time had not yet come. "Holy God said I am not good enough yet."

Once when she was lovingly speaking out her heart before her cherished statue, the Divine Child handed her a flower from her little altar. When chided by the nurse for getting up and taking a flower without leave, she answered: "I am sorry I took it, but Holy God did gib it me."

One of the Sisters went to pay the little sufferer a visit. Supposing her to be asleep and not wishing to wake her, she sat down quietly beside her. After some time Nellie opened her eyes, and a beaming smile lighted up her face, as she exclaimed, "O Mudder, I am so happy! I've been talking to Holy God."

"And what did He say?" asked the Sister.

"Holy God says I must not speak ob dese tings."

She was glad when the visits were over,

and she could close her eyes and think on “dese tings.”

Without anyone telling her, little Nellie knew when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. “Holy God is not in de lock-up to-day,” she would say, meaning the Tabernacle.

“How do you know?”

“Him did tell me.”

She knew also when the nurse did not receive Holy Communion. Sometimes the child was too ill to be left alone, so the nurse would stay in an adjoining room. When she re-entered the sick chamber Nellie would say, “I’m going to tell Mudder on you; you did not get Holy God to-day.”

“You do not know, Nellie; you did not see me in the church.”

“But I know anyhow, an’ I will tell Mudder.”

Another day the nurse thought she could deceive the child, by opening and closing the

door as if she had gone out. After Mass, Nellie's reproach again awaited her: " You did not get Holy God to-day; I will tell Mudder."

One evening the dear child called for Reverend Mother. What could the darling want with Reverend Mother at this late hour? It would not be easy to get her, but Nellie insisted.

When Reverend Mother arrived, this was her startling question: " Mudder, after you receive Our Lord to-morrow morning will you come up and kiss me?"

The promise was given. After Mass Reverend Mother went up to the child and kissed her. Nellie's face beamed with happiness. She joined her hands with reverence, then immediately motioned Reverend Mother away, closed her eyes and entered into silent converse with Holy God.

The nurse sometimes carried little Nellie around with her when she went to make the

Way of the Cross. There was no difficulty whatever for the child to grasp the meaning of the pictures at the Stations; and her grief expressed itself in great sobs and words of indignation, as the nurse proceeded telling her how cruel the executioners were, and that Our Divine Lord bore all these awful sufferings for our sins. The sufferings of Jesus Crucified, and the Sorrows of His Blessed Mother in seeing her divine Son thus treated, occupied Nellie's mind continually and caused her to weep bitter tears when alone. In thinking of them she forgot her own pains, although her sufferings were tortures; she did not even like to have any one speak to her about them, or if they did, she answered, "It hurts very bad, but Jesus suffered more."

Let us now go, dear reader, to the Convent Chapel at Sunday's Well. There it was that occurred a sweet pathetic scene, something you will think about, day after

day, for a very long time. It was the First Friday in December. The year was 1909. This is how the writer of her Life describes what took place.

“The Community Mass had been said and the Blessed Sacrament exposed upon the High Altar. Already the Sisters and the school children were assembled in the chapel praying God thanks for the wondrous favor He was about to bestow upon their saintly little friend. And then they brought her in, that tiny, sickly child, clothed in white and wearing the wreath and veil of First Communion, and bore her to the altar of her God. A solemn hush fell upon the pious congregation. Even the little children checked the sibilant whisperings of their holy, innocent prayers, lest they should disturb the recollection of that little figure, seated there before the sanctuary, silent, motionless, with head bowed low in prayer and adoration. And then the priest of God

came forth, robed in the livery of the Dispensers of His Mysteries, and undid the bars that enclosed the Prisoner of Love.

“Misereatur Vestri”—and every hand sought brow and breast and shoulder, to form the saving cross of Christ.

“Domine, non sum dignus,”—and every head was bowed in adoration. Then they saw the Priest approach, and little Nellie raise her head . . . and Holy God had come into her heart, her yearnings had at last been satisfied; she no longer had to beg in vain.

“The child,” writes the Jesuit Father already referred to, “literally hungered for her God, and received Him from my hands in a transport of love.”

The joyous strains of the First Communion Hymn arose, sung by the sweet voices of pious little children, who prayed that soon their loving God would bid them also come. Still she sat there motionless,

insensible to things of earth, in silent, loving conference with the Saviour, her radiant countenance reflecting the Eternal Light that dwelt within her heart.

The Holy Father's decree on Communion for Children had not yet been published; so it seemed a wonderful thing that a very young child, a mere babe, only four years old, should desire and be allowed to receive Holy Communion.

She understood so well, she yearned so ardently, she was so good and pious, how could they deny her, especially when they saw that her dread disease would soon carry her off? Caries had attacked her jaw bone. The odor from the diseased bone was almost unbearable; but now—wonderful change—after Nellie's First Communion the odor disappeared and never returned.

When the dear little victim was carried back to nurse's room after receiving Our Lord, she continued her thanksgiving almost

without any interruption till evening. Her friends brought her souvenirs of the happy day—flowers, medals, scapulars, and the like. She received their tokens sweetly and thankfully, asked that they be placed around her cot, and then lapsed into silence to continue her conversation with Holy God. She wished to be turned in bed to face the wall, so as not to be distracted by the sight of things in the room.

Between this lovely day and that of her death on February 2d, following, she had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion thirty-two times. She soon became too weak to be carried to the Chapel, so Holy God was brought to her room. Every evening she made her special preparation, and in the morning would speak only as little as possible. She engaged the nurse not to speak to her until after Mass.

Each day she seemed to receive Our Blessed Lord with greater fervor. Her

eyes beautiful, large, and bright, followed the priest in every movement. One of the Sisters thus described her: "Scarcely had she received when her face underwent a complete transformation; a supernatural expression diffused itself on her countenance, her head fell back on the pillow, and she grew pale as death. I could detect no movement in that little body, and I thought for the moment that she had expired. The reason, however, was that she knew so well what the Blessed Sacrament is, and what He was Whom she then received into her heart, that the intensity of love and gratitude overwhelmed her, and she became insensible to things of earth."

Little Nellie was a prophet. A priest who was very sick sent word to her that he wished her to pray for him, and as soon as he was well again he would go to see her. Nellie promised to pray for him; then she added, "Holy God is very fond of Pader—but he

will never see me"; which proved to be the case.

Nellie was daily growing worse. To all appearances heaven was very near for the dear child. Sometime before she had said, "Holy God says I am not good enough to go yet"; now she foretold that she would die on Sunday. On Friday all thought her on the point of taking her departure. She was so low it seemed impossible that she should survive till the day she foretold; yet Sunday came and was nearly spent, before the Angel came to conduct her to Our Lord. She passed away in joyous expectation, and all around her felt that she had flown straight into the arms of Holy God.

People go now to pray at her grave. Young and old may be seen carrying their petitions to Little Nellie of Holy God, and Holy God is pleased to grant many favors, even miracles it is said, through this saintly child of only four years.

PRAYER  
TO  
THE ANGEL ADORERS

A NGELS most beautiful,  
Loving and dutiful,  
Sweet is your vigil, the night and the day;  
Angel Adorers,  
We, little implorers,  
Happy beside you forever would stay.

Angels most beautiful,  
Loving and dutiful,  
Offering your praise to our God and our King;  
Angel Adorers,  
We, little implorers,  
Beg you to offer the hearts we now bring.

## AHMNA-JOSEPHINE

### A LITTLE SAINT OF NINE YEARS

SOME sixty years ago a little black girl was ransomed from an African slave-market by Father Olivier, a holy Italian missionary who had devoted his life to rescuing from slavery and sin the least of God's little ones. She was about seven years old, and almost wasted away by the cruel treatment she had endured after being stolen from her home in the far East, when the good priest found her and brought her over the sea to the Sisters of the Visitation at Piedmont, Italy. There she found home and love and faith once more in her fellow-beings; and there she first learned to know and love the Saviour of mankind, to whom she soon gave all her heart.

One day in the infirmary, when the little girl was in a pensive mood, the Sister Infirmary, in an effort to divert her, said, "Tell me, Ahmna, of your life before you came to us." With touching simplicity the child obediently complied.

"My mamma was beautiful, though black, and had a great many women to wait upon her. My father was always well dressed, not like the Turks, but like the Arabs on grand festivals. I was their only child, and was allowed to play in the court-yard, carefully guarded by the women for fear a Gélaba, or child-stealer, would come in. But one day I was left alone at my play, and hearing steps behind me I looked up to see the dreaded Gélaba. I screamed and started to run, but the man seized my hand, then caught me up. When we were far from the house he put me down, took hold of my hand, and commanded me to run; but, alas! I could not keep up with

his long steps, and my feet were soon bleeding and full of thorns. Seeing that I really could not walk, the ugly Gélaba carried me to his house, where his wife, with a large thorn, drew out all the thorns from my feet and gave me a little bread to eat. I ate it, but I was thinking all the while of my dear father and mother and of the home I should see no more.

“ When I had been some days in this man’s house, he bound me with other little girls whom he had stolen and placed us on a camel. We traveled a long time in that way, without stopping day or night. We cried, for the Gélaba was so wicked that he never gave us anything to eat, though another man who was with him sometimes gave us bread. The sun beaming down on our heads made us suffer terribly. At home they had always put on my head something to protect me from the sun.

“ Afterward the Gélaba sold me to an-

other man more wicked than himself, who gave me blows all the time and never anything to eat. He made me watch the sheep, but when he saw that I was too little to take good care of the sheep, the man sold me to a Turk.

"In the Turk's house everything was very handsome and well arranged. The walls were covered with beautiful stuff, and some of the furniture was of gold. Every day a table was prepared for the Turk to dine with his sisters, and while they ate a little negress and I had to sing and shake the tambourine. When we made the least mistake another Turk would beat us, so that every day when we saw the table prepared we would begin to weep. A sister of the Turk pitied me because I was so little, and loved me, and she would bring me good things in secret.

"Then the Turk told me one day that he was going to sell me, and, soon after, my

dear, noble Father Olivieri came with money to buy me. He took me in his arms so tenderly and carried me to the ship; and peace came back to my heart, and I was very happy even though I feared the sea.

“The blows I had received, and being so long without food, made me fall ill. The good Father wept, he was so afraid I would die. When we left the ship he carried me to a house of religious who took care of me for two days; then he brought me to the ship where we met Nina, his servant, with other little negresses.

“And then—ah! then, dear Sister, we came here, and I shall not forget what Father Olivieri said to me: ‘I am going to give you to the Sisters, who love little children very much and give them all sorts of good things. They will teach you of Jesus, and therefore you will be very happy. And you must always be good, and love and obey them, for it is the will of God that you

live with them always.' Then he gave me his blessing. And now, though I am always ill, how true it is that I am well taken care of and have everything I want. And when I die I shall go to heaven."

Such was the little sufferer's own account of the tragedies of her slavery, and of the bitter lessons she had had to learn at an age when other little children know only love and tenderest care.

The Sisters found her to be proud and capricious by nature, but generous of soul, noble and grave in bearing, and evidently of a princely race. Highly intelligent, she learned quickly to speak, read, and write Italian, despite the fact that intense suffering prevented her applying herself closely to study. She retained always the Oriental custom of using "thou" in addressing any one, and was so irresistible in her way of speaking that others were unconsciously bent to her will. She studied her catechism

most carefully and reverently, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, never failed to understand the instructions on the mysteries and maxims of Faith.

A longing to be baptized influenced her from the first. Whenever she met the Bishop she would present her little head to him, saying, "Wilt thou not baptize me, dear Bishop? My soul is black; make it beautiful and hasten to open heaven to me. Ah, make me a child of God!" She received the crucifix for the first time in a transport of love, caressing it and weeping over it. The little she had learned of the sufferings of Jesus for all men had filled her with deepest adoration.

The first time she was present at Mass she observed the Sisters going one by one to the little window through which they received Holy Communion, and inquired of her teacher, "Why do the Sisters go there?" She was told, "They go to receive Jesus."

The child said nothing more, but the next morning as soon as she saw the Sisters going toward the window she left her place and, with joined hands, prepared to follow. "Where are you going?" asked a Sister. "To receive Jesus." "No, no, that is impossible; you are not yet baptized." "Then let me kiss Him! At least permit me to kiss Him," she implored, and was inconsolable when her request was denied.

Even before her baptism Ahmna's desire for Holy Communion was so great that, after becoming a Christian and being made a soldier of Christ in Confirmation, her longing to unite herself to the God of love knew no bounds. "Dear Bishop," she would plead, "if thou art really my father, if thou lovest me, give me my Jesus, for I cannot live without Him." And, sighing, she would observe to the Sisters, "How happy you all are. You have Jesus in your souls while, alas! I have Him not."

Love of order and modesty were the most prominent traits of her character. She could not endure the least want of neatness. While she liked to be caressed, one had to proceed so daintily as scarcely to touch her, or she would remonstrate, "Gently; take care, thou wilt disarrange my hair. I dislike exceedingly to have my dress disordered." When she was in bed the slightest spot on anything about her distressed her, and to please her the clothes were drawn so smoothly across the bed that there was no wrinkle in them. "Please take care not to disturb my bed," were usually her first words to anyone who approached. Her modesty was so extreme that she would allow no one but the Infirmarian to touch her, and in the presence of others would refuse most positively to uncover even her arm.

On receiving her first visit from the physician, instead of answering his ques-

tion, Ahmna fixed her eyes on the Reverend Mother's face, as though trying to read there whether she was to trust the stranger. Finally beckoning to her, she gravely whispered, "Does this man pray?" "Yes, my child, he is baptized and prays like a Christian." Immediately she turned to the Doctor, talked very amiably with him, explained her sufferings and became very friendly, and was always afterwards very glad to see him.

As the child's desire for Baptism daily increased and she was found sufficiently well instructed, the Bishop consented to baptize her on the first Sunday after Easter, 1854. She then received the name of Josephine. Her piety and recollection throughout the ceremony, which lasted two hours, was most edifying and bespoke heroic self-restraint. She was not once seen to raise her eyes. When the Bishop had poured upon her head the regenerating waters, and the dress which

marked her former slavery had been replaced by the white baptismal robe, his Lordship placed about her neck a beautifully carved silver crucifix as a pledge of the union between her pure soul and her Redeemer. Josephine's cup of joy was full. The grace of Baptism gave new strength to her weak little body, and enkindled within her a sanctity which grew with each succeeding day.

To be confirmed was her next desire, and she had recourse once more to her good friend, the Bishop.

“Dear Father, wilt thou not confirm me?”

“Be content, my child, to enjoy the happiness of Baptism. It has driven the demon from your heart; are you not satisfied?”

“Yes, Bishop, satisfied that the demon is no longer in my heart, but he tries to assail my soul, and I have not strength to battle with him.”

“Very well, study your catechism dili-

gently, and on the feast of Pentecost I will confirm you."

Josephine redoubled her efforts, but in the meantime was attacked by an illness from which she barely recovered by Pentecost. Her confidence, however, never faltered. "My good Angel will aid me, have no fear. I shall be well enough to be confirmed."

Confession was very distasteful to her, but always produced in her marked sentiments of contrition and humility. A few days before the feast she said to Monseigneur,

"Dear Bishop, I will go to Confession to thee for my Confirmation."

"Very well, my dear child, on the morning of the feast before my Mass."

"I thank thee very much; I shall prepare myself with great care."

She wore for the ceremony of Confirmation her Baptismal dress, for which she had

the greatest veneration. She would cover it with kisses and permit no one but the Reverend Mother to touch it. "My good Bishop gave me this dress; he touched it with his own hands," she would say.

The work of divine grace in Josephine's heart was apparent in the fortitude with which she suffered. Illnesses followed, one after another, almost without interruption; but she never omitted her daily exercises of piety nor performed them with less than her habitual fervor. Her aspirations to God were unceasing, and her yearning for Holy Communion never left her.

"I cannot be contented as long as I do not receive Jesus in my heart. Do me this act of charity; give me Jesus soon."

It became impossible to resist such entreaties, and on the feast of the Sacred Heart, the 23rd of June, 1854, she was permitted to make her first Holy Communion. The child was in an ecstasy of

happiness, and her heart overflowed with thankfulness and love.

An insatiable hunger for the Eucharistic food was awakened by her first approach to the Holy Table. When her health permitted her to go to Communion in the chapel, she would ask the evening before to be waked very early, and frequently after a bad night she would have to summon all her strength to go to receive our dear Lord, Who never failed to reward her sacrifice by filling her soul with pure delight. Then in sweet simplicity she would speak of her happiness: "This morning the demon wished me to lose my Communion, but I conquered myself and took care not to listen to him. Now I am well, and my heart bounds with joy. The demon weeps, but Jesus smiles."

One day Josephine said to the Mother, "I want to tell thee something that I have very much at heart: I want to ask thee to

allow me to make a vow to the Blessed Virgin to wear blue for a year in her honor."

"Who put that in your mind, dear child?"

"My good Angel told me."

"But why do you wish to make this vow?"

"That the Blessed Virgin may obtain for me to die this year and go to heaven with her, or to make me a little better, that I may be able to help the Sisters. I do love to serve the Sisters."

Her pious desire was granted, and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1855, after Communion Josephine received the Livery of Mary. Her new blue dress made her very happy. She kissed it tenderly, saying, "Dear dress of the Blessed Virgin, I am so happy to have received thee. The Blessed Virgin has obtained for me the grace to wear her dress, and later she will obtain for me the grace to receive the veil. Dear Holy Virgin, thou art truly my very good Mother."

One morning the little invalid arose with her eyes so swollen that she could hardly open them. "Perhaps," she said, "I am going to be blind; but I will be patient, and I will not see the faults of others. I should much rather lose my sight than lose my mind; for if I lost my mind I could not think of Jesus, nor speak to Him, and I could not receive the sacraments."

In a few days she felt a little stronger and was able to get up, but the improvement was only temporary. Although she was naturally a pleasing looking child, her illness made her appear almost deformed. Everybody felt for her the greatest compassion, and one of the Sisters exclaimed pityingly one day, "Poor Josephine, what has become of that pretty little body?"

"It matters little to me that my body is deformed. The body goes under the ground. I am satisfied if my soul is beautiful; that goes to heaven. I can please

Jesus even with a deformed body. Do not doubt that I am glad to suffer. To carry the cross with Jesus is painful, but I shall have a beautiful paradise."

Awaking in transports of joy one morning she exclaimed, "Last night I was such a long time in heaven."

"What did you see there?" asked the Sister.

"I saw a beautiful lady with a great many others, and I said to her, 'Holy Virgin, I do not suffer as much as Jesus did. I should wish like Him to have a crown of thorns on my head, nails in my hands and feet, and a lance in my heart.' The Blessed Virgin said to me, 'Think on the Passion of Jesus, suffer patiently a little longer, and then I will come and take you to heaven with me.'

Over and over again Ahmna-Josephine would read her book on the Passion, always with difficulty restraining her tears. She was constantly told that true piety does not

consist in pious words, tender tears, affectionate sentiments alone; but above all in suffering willingly for the love of God, in always doing His Holy Will, and continually renouncing one's own will. Such lessons always deeply impressed her. "I have promised Jesus," she said one day after a silent reflection, "never to do my own will."

Meanwhile the dear child's pains became more and more severe. She could not eat, sleep, nor occupy herself with the lightest work, and enforced idleness made her very sad. A terrible cough was added to her other ills. Remedies were administered, but to no avail. Through it all Ahmna was most patient and heroic. She remained always calm and sweet with those about her. One morning she explained to her nurse, "When I coughed last night and you gave me bad, bitter medicines, I took them willingly, because I thought all the time of the vinegar

Jesus tasted, and then they seemed good."

Then for ten long days Ahmna-Josephine lay immovable on her bed, which had become her cross. Her room in the infirmary became a school of Christian heroism. She never spoke of her afflictions unless questioned about them, and then her answers were brief and showed no self-pity. The only consolation she permitted herself was the crucifix: she would hold it firmly in her hands, ardently kissing the adorable wounds of Jesus.

She received the Viaticum several times, and at length the Doctor, seeing her danger, advised her receiving Extreme Unction. When she heard this her face lighted up with joy—she appeared so anxious to take her flight to heaven. "What graces Jesus deigns to grant me! This morning I received Holy Communion; this evening I receive the holy oils; and then, when Jesus wishes, I shall go to heaven! If I had died

among the Arabs, how different my lot would be!"

After Extreme Unction Josephine continued to suffer for fifteen days longer, receiving the Holy Viaticum every three or four days. She felt her death approaching, and the most ardent longing of her heart, next to that of seeing God, remained unrealized. Her desire to receive the veil of the Visitation dated from the time of her First Communion. On the feast of the holy Mother de Chantal, she said to the Reverend Mother, "This morning after Communion Jesus said to my heart, 'I wish thee to be my spouse.' And the holy Mother de Chantal said to me, 'I wish thee to be my daughter.' These words are always in my thoughts, and I think always of Jesus."

She had preserved these supernatural words in her heart with jealous care, and it was manifest to all that she had received the great grace of a vocation to the religious life.

The happiness of a soul entirely consecrated to God delighted her and filled her with a holy desire. She talked of it unceasingly and never saw the Bishop without importuning him most earnestly.

Once when she was most pressing in her entreaties, the good prelate said to her, "Be patient a little longer; you are too young." "That is true," replied Josephine, with spirit, "but it is also true that I will die soon. I have prayed for thee so often at Communion. Has not Jesus whispered to thy heart to give me the veil? Mother, the Sisters, all are willing to have me take the veil. Thou wilt see that Jesus will grant me the favor."

One day in April, unable to restrain herself longer, Ahmna-Josephine said to the Infirmarian, in a tone that went to the heart and showed the intensity of her desire, "Is it possible they will not give me the veil? Must I die without it?" And not having

the courage to refuse the pious child on the very threshold of eternity, the Mother immediately took measures to gratify her desires. The Bishop willingly granted the permission, and, knowing the perfect dispositions of the little invalid, permitted her to take the three simple vows of the religious life.

On the day appointed for her reception, while the necessary preparations were being made, and while the garlands of flowers were being arranged round her bed, Josephine was occupied only with God. In a short time all was in readiness. They were obliged to hasten for fear of being too late. The dear little nine-year old girl pronounced the solemn words, and received with the veil the name of Sister Laurensine Fremiot, and was given the cross and crucifix.

Through all the ceremony the child's face glowed with a heavenly light. Afterwards

she talked constantly of the grace she had received. She showed the cross which was given her, and exclaimed with rapture, "I have at last my cross. I kiss it all the time. How happy I am to be the spouse of Jesus Christ! Our Lord told me that He sent me great suffering in order that I might be very near and dear to His Sacred Heart. Nothing in the world now pleases me; even my blue dress weighed upon me. I am a spouse of Jesus Christ!"

The dear little sufferer ceased not to thank the Sisters, whom she begged not to leave her. From time to time she would glance with astonishment to the right of her bed, seeming to see something extraordinary. Finally she said to the priest, "I see Jesus, I see Mary, I see St. Joseph. Oh, how beautiful they are! Soon they will come to take me. My heart tells me that I shall die to-day."

At half-past twelve she opened her eyes,

glanced to the right, a lovely smile illumined her face, and her soul took its flight to heaven. Her body, until now so deformed, regained its natural beauty and on her face lingered an expression of heavenly peace as if the last kiss of her Divine Spouse had left thereon the imprint of eternal beatitude.

## FREDDY'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

**F**OR forty hours, raised on high,  
Above the Tabernacle closed,  
In gilded ostensorium  
The consecrated Host reposed.

All day and night the holy watch  
Was kept before the altar throne,  
And faithful people hastened there  
Lest Jesus should be left alone.

And well they knew the Saviour's word  
Was full of promise—"Ask, believe,  
And, whatsoever be your prayer,  
In faith and hope you shall receive."

So, all the day and all the night,  
Till forty hours had passed away,  
Adoring hearts were waiting there  
To hear what Jesus had to say.

Among the silent worshipers  
A little lad had knelt and prayed;  
Though others often came and went,  
Dear little Freddy stayed and stayed.

And, now, 'twas Benediction hour,  
Ere leaving them would Christ bestow  
One blessing more, and—marvel great—  
To one a sweetest favor show.

The aged priest, and altar boys  
With Freddy in their midst, now knelt  
Upon the altar steps, when lo!  
The Sacred Presence near they felt.

With gaze enraptured, arms outstretched,  
And drawn as if in close embrace,  
Dear Freddy's lips the secret told—  
He saw his Saviour face to face.

Oft had he begged the Infant God  
To come into his longing breast;  
And Jesus promised him that night  
He'd come quite soon to be his guest.

"A splendid altar boy you've been;  
Come now, and get a fine reward":  
Thus spake the priest: but Freddy said,  
"I only want my dearest Lord."

"Why, six years old is very young,"  
Amazed, the holy priest replied.  
"Not when you want Him," said the child,  
Who closed his eyes and deeply sighed.

"Come, then, to-morrow morn, my boy,  
No longer shall you be denied;  
The Saviour wants you, too, I know,"  
With tearful eye the priest replied.

The morrow would his birthday be,  
And First Communion his reward.  
Oh! happy, favored child, to have  
As Birthday Gift Our Blessed Lord!

## SAINT ARMELLA

THREE hundred years ago there lived in Brittany a wealthy peasant named Nickolas. He built his cottage in a bright green plot, near a clump of stately oaks, and pines, and poplars. And, because he feared God, his barns were blessed with an abundance of golden corn and fattening wheat. But, better than all, happy children greeted this sturdy peasant, when at sunset after a day's hard work he returned home, tired and hungry.

Our Divine Lord once called Himself "The Flower of the Field," "The Lily of the Valley." Little children, too, are called God's flowers. Some flowers grow beautiful in a green-house, where they are tenderly

cared for by a florist; some grow in a garden; and many grow out in the open fields and meadows, such as the bright red poppies, and the white and golden daisies.

Our story is going to be about one of these "Flowers of the Field," one that grew up a Eucharistic lily out in the meadow—God's garden. Her name is Armella, one of the happy children that waited for their father every evening at sunset in far-away Brittany.

We do not know even the names of her brothers and sisters; but, because Armella loved Our Lord so much, the story of her beautiful life has come down to us.

Armella had a holy mother who told her all about God and His lovely world, the sky, the ocean, the mountains, and, especially, about our sweet Jesus living day and night so lonely in the Tabernacle. This dear mother taught her little daughter how to say the "Our Father," and explained to her

that "Daily Bread" means Holy Communion.

When Armella was about six years old, she one day said to her Mother, "Mother, Our Lord told me He wishes me to receive Him into my heart every day." "Every day, my child! why, even grown-up people are not permitted to receive Him every day." "I know that, dear Mother," replied Armella, "but Our Lord told me; He even commanded me to do so."

What could the mother say to her favored child? she did not dare discourage her, and, yet, the custom of the time seemed an insurmountable barrier. But when little Armella would cling to her mother's skirts, pleading, "I want Jesus to come to my heart, too," He heard her loving sighs. Holy priests often came to her home to say Mass. Then she would beg them to give her Our Lord. At first they permitted her this favor only twice a week; but, later, her ardent wish to

receive every day was granted; she used to say, "I can not live without my Daily Bread."

Armella, however, was just like other children. She loved to work and study and play and sing; but even while thus engaged she always felt Our Lord beside her, and when she grew older she related what her thoughts were: "While crossing a running brook," she said, "the clear crystal water was to me like the saving water of Baptism, that made my soul so pure and white; it brought to my mind, too, how Our Lord crossed over the Brook Cedron on His way to the Garden of Olives. The beautiful meadow flowers always reminded me of Jesus, and the spotless lily taught me to ask Our Lady to keep my heart pure and holy for my next Communion." If she happened to prick her tiny hand with a thorn, instead of heeding the pain she

would say to her mother, "See Mother! but Jesus suffered more for me."

When she saw little lambs frisking about the fields, her question would be, "Mother, why do you say, 'Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world?'" Patiently her mother would tell her how sheep are shorn, and how meek they are, and that they are like Our Lord, Who, because of our sins, suffered death and uttered not a word.

When she saw little chickens slipping under the wings of their mother, she would ask Our Blessed Mother to throw her mantle of protection over her and keep her from sin. Even the trees, moving to and fro, made this thoughtful child think of Our Lord. Looking out upon the skies, she would wonder how God could be everywhere and she be in God.

Little Armella went occasionally to the seashore to gather shells. She loved the

great wide sea very much, and would sit for hours on the beach, watching the white-winged ships vanish in the distant blue horizon. She would wonder where they were going and what would happen to them. She would think of her soul as the white-sailed yacht, and ask herself where it is going; and her large brown eyes would look far out into *eternity*, and imagine some beautiful island beyond, called Heaven, where she was going to live forever, with Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, and her own darling father and mother, brothers and sisters, and millions of happy saints and angels.

While taking a drive through the country, and seeing great wide fields of golden wheat, Armella thought of all the grains of wheat that would be threshed, and put into sacks, and carried to the neighboring mill, to be ground into fine white flour; and from this flour a thousand little hosts would be made. Then a priest would breathe over

them, and say the sacred words of Consecration: "This is my body," and those little hosts would be changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord. Armella would then say to herself: "And one little Host is coming into my heart to-morrow, and Jesus will be in me and I in Him."

Sunny France is the land of vineyards. Away in the distance from the roadside you can see grassy steps covered with vines. Here busy vintagers cut off heavy bunches of purple, red, and white grapes, and, gathering them into high wicker baskets, send them off to market. This beautiful scene awakened St. Armella's thoughts. She learned that the largest, ripest, and whitest grapes were bought by the monks, put into a press, and the juice poured into immense casks and stored away in cellars. Every morning some happy little altar boy pours some of this delicate wine into the chalice, held by the consecrated hand of the priest;

then the priest breathes over it, and says the solemn words pronounced by Our Lord at His Last Supper: "This is my blood"; and the wine is changed into the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

During the cold bleak winter, when flowers and wheat and grapes were buried under the deep snow, little Armella heard sweet messages from the snow-flakes that

"Busily through the night  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white."

Wrapt in beautiful fancies, she

"Stood and watched by the window  
The noiseless work of the sky,"

and thought how it was like the grace God showers down on our souls without our hearing it; like God's Sanctifying Grace falling down on the sorrowful sinner, when the priest pronounces the words of absolu-

tion, and his soul becomes again pure as the driven snow. Sometimes she would examine the many wonderful shapes of the flakes, and rejoice because nobody could make such perfect crystals as God could. Again the snow would speak to her in a silent language, and tell her how pure she must keep her soul, so that her heart might be a holy Ciborium where Jesus would want to rest day and night. Indeed, Little Armella loved Our Lord so ardently that she often exclaimed: "Oh, if I could take my heart from my body, it would fly to the altar and rest in the Ciborium with the snow-white Host."

Armella not only thought beautiful *thoughts*, but she did brave *deeds* for Jesus; such as giving, not a *pretty*, but her *prettiest* frock to some poor child, or doing with such a gracious smile something she didn't like to do, that everybody thought she loved to do it—and all to please Our Lord. She

made these generous sacrifices so often when she was a little girl, that it became easy; thus it happened that when she grew older she was able to do a very brave deed for Him.

And this is what she did. In her comfortable happy home she had very little to suffer. In order to be more like Our Lord, she gave away all her money to her mother and the poor, and then went to the home of an old woman named Elise, who was very cross, to take care of her and try to make her happy. Our Lord was so pleased with this heroic act that He told Armella she would ever after *feel* Him beside her in all her joys and sorrows.

But because she was so faithful to her unlovely patient, Armella could not hear Mass nor receive Our Lord into her heart every day, which made her very sad. One morning, after a few days of weary waiting, she prepared herself as if she were actually

going to receive Him. "O my God and my All!" she exclaimed, "Thou knowest how I long to receive Thee. I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee with all my heart. Come to me, for I cannot live without Thee." And lo! before her she saw a burning taper, and a hand which held a Host put it most reverently on her tongue; Armella then received Our Lord into her happy heart.

Her peevish mistress, who heard her singing beautiful hymns of joy all day, and saw her wearing such a happy smile, wondered very much. At last Elise asked her what made her so happy. When Armella told her what had happened the woman's eyes filled with tears; and ever after she proved to be, not only a kind mistress, but, above all, a true friend of Our Lord.

This change in Elise deprived Armella of the object she sought in taking charge of her patient, that of doing something hard

for the love of God; but the conversion of a soul was sweet consolation to the angelic girl, and He for Whom she was willing to sacrifice all the pleasures of life wished to reward her with the joy of His Sacred Presence, even should it take a miracle to do so. The Divine Lover of souls is never surpassed in generosity. He gives His special gifts to those that give Him something. For our little offerings He bestows wondrous, priceless favors. For our love, He gives us Himself.

## TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

**D**EAR MOTHER MARY! By the love  
With which thy heart prepared  
For Jesus' coming down to earth,  
As Gabriel had declared,  
Oh! help me with thy heavenly art  
To worthy make my longing heart.

Dear Mother Mary! By thy love  
When Jesus came to thee,  
At Bethlehem on Christmas night,  
Our Saviour God to be,  
Oh! help me and thy love impart,  
When comes my Jesus to my heart.

Dear Mother Mary! By the love  
Within thy bosom pent,  
When thou so often didst receive  
The Holy Sacrament,  
Oh! pray that in death I may depart  
With Jesus dwelling in my heart.



ST. PASCHAL BAYLON



## PASCHAL BAYLON

### THE SAINT OF THE EUCHARIST

THE Arabs have many quaint and pretty traditions. Among these is one of the Child-Jesus as a shepherd boy, at the time he was sojourning in Egypt with Mary and Joseph. The Holy Family had sought refuge in that distant land to save the Divine Infant from being included in the massacre of the Holy Innocents, ordered by King Herod whom the Wise Men had told of the birth of the Messiah.

Arabia was a wealthy country, but the inhabitants loved to roam rather than to work; so, when the princes wished anything of importance done, they engaged workmen from Egypt where the arts flourished and skilled workmen were held in honor.

Most of the Arabs lived in tents. Some of these dwellings were as small as the gypsy tents we see by the roadside; others were very spacious and were divided into many rooms and large lobbies; and beautiful gardens surrounded them. It was towards one of these princely domains, runs the legend, that the Holy Family pursued their way, during their return journey from the city of Heliopolis in Egypt to their home in Nazareth.

A swift little mountain stream brought them to a sudden standstill. While looking out upon the delightful scene, and wondering how they should cross to the other side, a skiff came into sight containing a handsome sheik, magnificently attired. The Arabs, famed for their brilliant colors of dress, are noted also for their hospitality. The prince pressed the Holy Family to make use of his boat, and when they landed conducted them to his palace.

A number of workmen engaged in constructing a draw-bridge farther down the stream met with difficulties they could not overcome. This was what brought the sheik up-stream just at this moment. St. Joseph, hearing of the trouble, asked if he might go to the bridge. The prince was greatly pleased to escort him to the work, but he had no idea that the visit would mean anything to him.

Now St. Joseph was a carpenter, and it was but a few minutes before he discovered what was the difficulty. He begged to make a suggestion. The Bedouins were directed to attend to his words, and at once they succeeded with the work. The kind old sheik was lavish in his thanks. He moreover entreated St. Joseph to remain till the bridge was finished. St. Joseph consented provided his blessed charge could tarry with him. Of course there was no objection to that.

All the men around now wanted to learn from St. Joseph the art of building. So great was their eagerness that they even forsook their flocks on the hillside. The Blessed Virgin and her Divine Son strolling through the valleys, saw the neglected sheep. Jesus said to His Mother: "Thou wilt permit me, Mother, and I shall lead them to drink." Mary replied, "Go, little shepherd."

As the Divine Child climbed up the slope, the scattered flock came bounding towards Him in joy; the lambs frisked about Him and bleated lovingly when He gently touched them with the stick He took up for a shepherd's crook. Day after day for a week, Mary's Son was seen amid the sheep; and, it was said, tears stood in the eyes of passers-by, who gazed in wonder upon the beauty of the Child and the flock that always kept around Him. Never were sheep so well cared for. Never was shepherd so loved.

When the day came for the departure of the Holy Family, the sheik presented St. Joseph with a fine Onam camel, the finest, indeed, of his herd. The women of his household, who had bestowed the most delicate attentions upon the Blessed Mother and her Child, filled Our Lady's hands with emeralds and pearls, gems from their own Felix Arabia; and to Jesus they gave what he desired, a little lamb. And when the Holy Family, mounted upon the camel, pursued their homeward journey, bands of poets and musicians accompanied them a long distance, singing the songs of praise they had composed for the "Friends of Allah," as they called their holy guests. Thus ends the Arab's tale.

#### THE CHILD SAINT OF TORRE HERMOSA.

You are wondering now what this story has to do with Paschal Baylon. Well, St. Paschal was a shepherd boy, too, just

about the age of the Divine Child in the Arab's tale. He lived in beautiful Spain, in a little village called Torre Hermosa, in the province of Aragon.

His birth takes us back to the year 1540. Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday, was the day that brought this wonderful babe into the world. The Spaniards have the devout practice of naming their children for the Saint on whose festival their birth occurs. In this country Pentecost is called the Pasch of the Holy Ghost; hence, this dear child received the name of Paschal; and his biographers say it was doubly suitable, since his whole life is a marvelous evidence that the Holy Spirit had entire possession of his soul.

From his infancy Paschal was called "the Angel of the House." His brothers and sisters, though older, were directed by him, and even their elders fell under the charm of his magnetic influence.

If Paschal's parents were poor, they were very rich, nevertheless, in faith and piety and with the treasure they possessed in their saintly child. The impressions he received in the bosom of his family were all of deep piety and sincere holiness. One of his biographers says: "Before he could yet lisp the childish terms for father and mother, he was already able to pronounce, with perfect distinctness, the names of Jesus and Mary, the first words his pious mother had taught his baby lips to utter. It was enchanting to see with what seriousness he made the sign of the cross and joined his tiny hands in prayer. Whenever God and divine subjects were referred to in his presence, he used to listen with evident attention, and assumed an air of infantine gravity."

This piety in the babe delighted his devout father and mother, and they missed no occasion of imparting to his infant mind sentiments that would foster a deeply re-

ligious spirit. His father would drop his work for a while to teach him some little prayer, or tell him something about the Saints. His mother would take him in her arms to church with her, proud of her little son who always attracted the admiration of the people. The first Sunday she took him to High Mass all eyes were upon him. "It was the first time he was to behold the Sacred Host," continues his biographer. "During the whole of the long function Paschal remained as motionless as a statue, and watched intently every action of the priest. His eyes never wandered from the altar; and when the celebrant raised the consecrated Host a tremor passed through his little frame as he lay in his mother's arms."

What happened at that moment is a secret between God and the soul. What caused that little body to quiver we can only guess; but, it is safe to say, some force went out from the Sacred Host that made captive the heart

of this child, who now is styled “The Saint of the Eucharist.”

The Sunday attendance at Holy Mass did not satisfy this blessed babe. He wished to be with Our Lord in the Tabernacle oftener; so one day he slipped away from home and crawled through the streets to the church. His mother soon missed him and began a search. He was nowhere around. She called and called, but no Paschal came. Filled with terror at the thought that the gypsies who frequented the neighborhood might have stolen the child, she ran from house to house making inquiry, and everybody joined in the search.

No doubt in her distress of mind his mother remembered the anguish of the Blessed Mother of God when her divine Son was lost for three days; and she must have invoked her aid with great earnestness as she went from door to door. It occurred to her now that Paschal might be in the church.

Her friends did not think it possible that a babe could creep so far without being picked up by anyone, but to satisfy her they followed her to the church. There he was, climbing up the sanctuary steps, his bright blue eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, and so wrapt in contemplation that he did not notice any noise till they seized him!

To be torn away from his cherished object just when he was so happy brought many burning tears; and they could pacify him only by telling him that they would bring him whenever they came to church.

The dear father and mother had not the heart to punish their child for this act which had cost them so much sorrow, but they told him he must never leave the yard alone again. Paschal was perfectly obedient.

His longing to be in the church, however, did not cease. But he must not go alone. Who would take him? Father and Mother were too busy, Brother and Sister were too

young and heedless to care. Ah! he would cling to the visitors who came, saying in broken words, "Please take me to God's holy house." Sometimes they took him and oh! how well rewarded they were, in seeing the child as he bounded in ecstatic love from their arms to the altar steps, where he would assume his posture of silent gazing upon the Tabernacle.

#### THE SAINTLY SHEPHERD BOY

Although Paschal's father was very poor, he owned a small flock of sheep. One morning when Paschal was just seven years old his father told him that he was to take charge of the sheep, lead them to pasture, stay with them all day, and bring them back at night.

Did the prospect of being alone out in the woods frighten the little lad? Not at all. Getting together some paper and ink, his rosary, and a little Office book, he started off. Two things he had learned that would make

his solitude delightful—the constant recollection of Jesus, really present in the Sacrament of the Altar, and a tender devotion towards Mary the Mother of Our Divine Lord.

From his infantine years he knew how to say his rosary; now he wished to add to his devotions the Office of the Blessed Virgin. But he could not read. There were no schools near the mountains where his flock grazed; what could he do? Oh! Paschal was an ingenious little fellow. He watched for travelers and besought them to tell him how to pronounce the words. When they condescended for a few moments, he thanked them most heartily, and then went off to study out other pages from what he had learned.

Paschal had carved the image of a crucifix upon the head of his shepherd's crook, and, above it, crosses to look like a Host. When his flock was out in places where no wayside

shrine or mountain chapel was near, he would stick his crook into the ground, and kneeling there before it would read his Office and say his prayers.

If other shepherds came to the same place, he regretted that his solitude should be disturbed; yet he was always amiable and tried to do good to them. Generally much older than himself, the shepherds were sometimes ill-mannered, and used impatient language. Paschal was always prompt with a remark to check their anger, and console them if they had sustained any loss. If a lamb had strayed away he would help look for it. His kindness was so marked that soon everybody was his friend. He took occasion from their good-will towards him to lead them to say the rosary and have great devotion to the Mother of God.

Many salutary lessons he taught, during those peaceful years of his shepherd life. One was this: "To gain the whole

world we should never utter the smallest falsehood."

To show how just and honest he was, the following instance is related: "During the vintage the Majoral (chief shepherd) wanted him to enter a vineyard and steal grapes. The Majoral was a terrible man—his passionate temper caused everybody to tremble with fear—while Paschal at that time was a mere boy. 'I am not going,' the brave little boy replied; 'it is wrong.' Hereupon the angered man seized upon Paschal and dragged him to the vineyard. 'Go in there or I'll kill you,' he said. 'You may kill me,' replied Paschal, 'but you cannot make me take what belongs to another.' "

The courage of this brave little boy conquered the fierce man, who thenceforth treated Paschal with great regard. In fact, before he quitted the career of a shepherd, the saintly youth had gained for himself, not

only high esteem, but real veneration from his comrades and masters.

When Paschal was quite a little lad he declared he wanted to be a friar. He begged to be allowed to wear the habit, as children sometimes were permitted to do in those far-away times; but his pious desires were not gratified. Nevertheless he would live like the monks; so, he made out a rule of life for himself, dividing all his time between work and prayer, and practising many penances and austeries. The spirit of charity combined with the spirit of penance in his fasts; for, by spending less on himself, he had more to give to the poor.

Penance, self-denial, too, was the means this beloved boy employed to overcome the attacks of Satan. Thus we read of him: “But of penitential secrets God and His Angels were alone the witnesses. On one occasion, however, the silence was broken, and the secret of the penances he practised

was allowed to escape. One of the shepherds, in a burst of confidence, had opened his heart to him. Having disclosed the temptations which left him no peace, day or night, he looked up into the eyes of his confidant and said: "And you, Paschal, are you, too, like the rest of men, harassed by the enemy and subject to these miseries?"

Paschal hung his head and blushed. Humility contended with charity for mastery in his bosom, but charity won the day. "Yes, my poor brother, I also, like yourself, am subject to temptation. But shall I tell you what I do? I give myself to prayer and penance until the tempter is vanquished—that's what I do."

To one who asked him why he always went barefoot, he replied: "Because the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and is only to be gained by suffering, trial, and self-denial."

And when they twitted him about praying

so much, good-naturedly he would answer,  
“We ought always to pray and not to faint.”

We have said that, when a little boy, Paschal wanted to be a friar. Now at an age to choose, the holy youth still cherished the same desire.

To live in some house consecrated to God, where his life could be passed in humble labor and prayer before the most Holy Sacrament, that was the ambition of this Saint of the Eucharist.

His vocation was settled for him in a very extraordinary way. His own words will tell us how: “I was by myself, a few paces from the lonely hermitage of Alconcela, and was kneeling at my prayers, when all of a sudden, to my great astonishment, I beheld a Franciscan Friar, accompanied by a Sister of the same order. They both came towards me, and, having saluted me as a brother, they said to me: ‘On the part of God and in His

name, we invite you to leave the world and enter Religion.' And then in glowing words they set before me the excellence and sublimity of that holy state so dear to God."

These heavenly visitors were said to be St. Francis Assisi and St. Clare—St. Francis, that great lover of holy poverty, St. Clare, who is always represented in art carrying a monstrance with the Sacred Host.

#### THE SAINT OF THE EUCHARIST

Paschal was now eighteen years old. No ties bound him to the world, so he set out at once for a monastery. Think of the poor, footsore youth's disappointment, when after the long journey he was told he could not be admitted. Paschal found work near by, and after a little while applied again for admission to the monastery. Again he was told to wait longer. So two years passed away, and Paschal was still waiting.

It was a sore trial, and Our Blessed Lord consoled Him for it in wonderful ways; the following is an example:

"One day when the ringing of the bell announced the approaching Elevation, Paschal, unable any longer to bear his privation, fell into a sort of agony, and in his distraction gave vent to one of those cries of desire and love that pierce the very Heart of God. 'My Master, my adorable Master, oh, that I might see Thee!' he exclaimed. Scarcely had this loving plaint escaped his lips than, raising his eyes, he perceived high up in the firmament a luminous point, which riveted his gaze. It seemed like that brilliant star which led the Magi to the Crib at Bethlehem. Anon it blazed with wondrous splendor, and then as it faded away the sky seemed to part asunder, and Paschal, gazing through this lattice in the Heavens, saw the forms of Angels prostrated before the Sacred Host, surmounting a chalice. In

presence of the Divine Majesty, Paschal fell flat on his face. Then regaining courage, he lifted up his head and gazed upon the heavenly vision. Turning to the other shepherds, he said: ‘Kneel down! Do you not see on high yon golden chalice, and the bright rays darting from the Host?’ And he pointed to the spot. ‘It is the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The Angels are adoring it. Come let us join our adorations to theirs.’

“All fell on their knees and adored, though the vision was not seen by any of them. Yet they believed it most firmly on Paschal’s word; for they knew he was incapable of an untruth, and too sturdy and practical to be deceived by his imagination.” This was but one of the many wondrous miracles that are connected with him.

As a Franciscan Friar, his reputation for sanctity daily increased. The convent felt honored to have him, and well they might;

for his whole life was a series of wonderful proofs of Our Divine Saviour's predilection. The dominant note of his life was said to be adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He was also most devout to Our Blessed Lady. On her feasts he was all but beside himself with joy. It is said he never pronounced the name of Mary without inclining his head; and when he came across an image of the Blessed Virgin he kissed it reverently, especially if it represented her as the Immaculate. Franciscans are pledged to defend the glorious title of the Immaculate Conception. Paschal Baylon was exceedingly chivalrous to Heaven's Queen. She nowhere found a more valiant champion.

We do not read anywhere of his First Holy Communion, but we find it related that, when as a religious he approached the Holy Tabernacle, he appeared as one belonging to another world. His face became radiant, his mind so absorbed, that when he

was wanted elsewhere it was necessary to call him, even to shake him, to gain his attention. As soon as his duty was finished, he hastened back to the House of God. The chapel, they said, might be called his headquarters. Every spare moment he had he would surely spend it there.

Through reverence for the August Presence, in prayer he always joined his hands and knelt immovable as a statue. One Holy Thursday, absorbed in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, he knelt thus motionless as a statue five consecutive hours.

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament cannot be separated from the Sufferings of Our Blessed Lord. Paschal's devotion to the Sacred Passion was most ardent. Moving around at his work, he would be heard whispering, "My Love is crucified! Oh, my Love is crucified." Pondering the sufferings of Christ Our Saviour he wished to suffer, too; hence his great penances, which were

rather outbursts of love than reparation for his sins, although he always thought of himself as a great sinner.

The good works performed by this holy Brother we must pass over with but brief general mention. As porter of the monastery he had charge of distributing the alms to the poor. His intense love of God was approached only by his love of the poor, whom he supplied, often in miraculous ways. Once he was caught carrying off a basket containing all the bread in the house. This was going too far, they thought, and he was taken by the sleeve to the Father Superior. While his informant was loudly condemning Paschal's generosity, the Saint slipped away with the basket to the refectory, and began dividing the bread for the Brethren. As he broke the loaves each piece became as large as it was before divided; and when all the tables had been supplied with the usual amount Paschal still had a basketful

for his dear poor. That ended all complaints about his charity.

But the poor received more than bodily care from this humble Franciscan Friar. He bestowed gifts of grace upon their souls far more precious than temporal favors. Sometimes a little prayer, a word of comfort or counsel, even a smile, would achieve victories in hearts that had long been dead to grace.

His beaming face and joyful words showed how happy he was whenever it was in his power to help the poor or render kind service to any one. But to see him in his happiest mood we must find him among little children. As soon as they caught the first glimpse of him they would run towards him; even babes in their mother's arms would spring down and toddle along as fast as they could, screaming to him to come for them. He never disappointed them; and, though often in a hurry with his business, he found time to tarry with them and tell them stories

about God and His beautiful Heaven, where little children would go if they were good and obedient. When asked once how he could spend so much time with the children and give them such loving attention, he replied: "In each of these boys I see the Child Jesus; and in each little girl I see Our Lady as a little child."

It was for the sake of a dear little girl that St. Paschal worked one of his first miracles after death. Kathleen Ferrer's mother must tell us about it. She thus wrote:

"After a long illness, which our little girl had at the age of seven years, the poor child was covered with tumors. At times the swellings would fester and run. The most skillful surgeons of Valencia operated upon the little victim, and for two years she was not out of their hands. They cut and burned her and removed large portions of flesh. It is impossible to describe what the poor child suffered. Her cries were heart-rending.

Finally the surgeons confessed that it would be useless to experiment further, and that the only thing now was resignation to the Will of God. We resigned ourselves, and our little girl bore her sufferings patiently for the love of God.

“ Brother Paschal had died in the meantime, and we saw with our own eyes our fellow-townsman, John Baptist Cebollin, return perfectly cured. ‘ Why should we not do like the rest? ’ my husband said to me. ‘ Let us take Kathleen to our blessed friend.’

“ It was no sooner said than done. The people fearing that the Religious would bury the Man of God that day, came *en masse*, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we could get inside the church. When the people saw us carrying our little girl, so pale and wasted that she seemed like a corpse, they took pity on us and made way to let us pass. On reaching the chapel where

the body of St. Paschal lay, we three fell on our knees; her father made Kathleen get as close as possible to the coffin of our friend, the Saint. I moistened a handkerchief with some drops of the liquid which distilled from his forehead, and with this precious balsam I rubbed the wounds of the face, the arm, and the foot. Kathleen had succeeded in grasping Paschal's right hand; she clasped it tightly and would not let it go. Oh! the beautiful and touching invocations she addressed to the Saint with the fervor of an Angel—the wee mite! We joined in the prayer—my husband and I. Never had we prayed so hard. The looks of those around were fixed upon us. Suddenly my husband turned toward me. ‘Courage,’ he said, ‘the Saint is going to work a fine miracle for our little one! Look! He is now opening his eyes.’

“I gazed in amazement and, like the child and all those around us, I distinctly saw

Brother Paschal's eyes open and then shut. It was now the moment of Consecration at the Mass. The server's bell then announced the first elevation and—Brother Paschal's eyes were wide open, gazing lovingly upon the Sacred Host. As the priest lowered the Host and placed it upon the Altar, the Saint's eyes closed gently; then as the Chalice of Christ's Precious Blood was elevated, those eyes opened again, having the same wonderful expression as he gazed at the Sacred Chalice. I had not ceased rubbing the child's wounds with the moisture that came from his forehead. Gradually the inflammation subsided, until at length all the swellings disappeared, leaving only the scars to attest the reality of the miracle. So our little Kathleen was healed."

Writers do not say, but can we doubt that the favored Kathleen grew up with a great love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? St. Paschal never left his gifts incomplete,

and this would have been incomplete had not the favor extended from the body to the soul of the darling child.

The passing of the Saint to heavenly glory took place on Pentecost Sunday, during High Mass, immediately after the Elevation. "Jesus, Jesus," were his dying words. He had just completed fifty-two years of mortal life.

When upon a time the late Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII, was selecting a patron for Eucharistic Works, a long list of illustrious names was handed to him, Saints like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, St. Clare, and others well known for special devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament. Paschal Baylon's name was last. The Pope, not knowing of this hidden Lay Brother, asked for the records of his life. They were brought and read to the Holy Father, who was amazed and charmed. To make amends, as it were, for so great a Saint being left in

obscurity during the past centuries, he issued the Apostolic Letter *Providentissimus Deus*, constituting St. Paschal Baylon "the special heavenly Protector of Eucharistic Congresses and of all Societies, both present and future, taking their name from the most Holy Eucharist."



THE LITTLE FLOWER  
On Her First Communion Day



## THE LITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS

“Jesus! —I would so wish to love Him,  
To love Him as never yet He has been loved.”

**S**HE called herself “The Little Flower of Jesus,” because, she said, Our Lord had chosen her soul, purely out of His infinite love, without any merit of her own, and loaded it with His graces and favors, just as He gives beauty and fragrance to the flowers.

Like the bright and lovely blossoms, whose sweetness and beauty are a delightful homage to Him Who made them, this favored little child also felt that she must offer to her dear God daily acts of virtue, whose sweetness, like fragrant blossoms, would

please the Heart of Our blessed Lord, and prove to Him how much she wished to love Him.

But, who was this "Little Flower of Jesus," and when did she live?

Her family name was Martin. In baptism she was called Mary Frances Theresa, and she was born January 2, 1873, at Alençon, a city in France. When only fifteen years of age she entered the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux, and died there September 30, 1897.

Her father and mother were both deeply pious and spared themselves no trouble to instruct their children in the truths of religion, and to instil into their hearts a tender love of God. Theresa was the youngest of nine children, four of whom died in their infancy. Her four sisters became nuns, three, like herself, at Carmel, one at the Visitation. All were charming little girls, but Theresa was the most

lovable. Her father always called her his "Queen."

We are almost startled when we hear the Little Flower say: "From the time I was three years old I never refused Our Lord anything." Only a babe, and yet her heart was so filled with love for our Lord, that she never refused Him anything!

Now we know, dear Little Flower, why you were so beloved, so caressed by Jesus—you always did what Jesus wanted; and we are not surprised to hear you tell us Jesus always did what you wanted.

In speaking of this favored child, is it to be said that she had none of the faults of children? Certainly not. She had some faults, and was punished for them too, as we shall now see. In a letter written to one of her sisters, her mother says: "As to our little ferret, I can hardly tell, so very young and thoughtless. She is a bright child, but not nearly so gentle as her sister, and dread-

fully stubborn. When she has once said no, she would rather stay all day and night in the cellar than give way."

Another letter says: "The child is uncommonly straightforward, and it is very pleasant to see how she runs after me, when she has done anything wrong, to confess it. 'Mama, I have given Céline a push. I have struck her, but I will not do it any more.' If she does any mischief we must all know of it. Yesterday she happened to tear a bit of wall paper, and it made her wretched. She wanted to tell Papa instantly. When he came home four hours later, we had forgotten all about it; but she ran to Marie and said, 'Tell Papa I tore the paper.' And there she stood like a culprit awaiting sentence. She has the idea that if she accuses herself she will be forgiven the more readily."

The Little Flower herself tells us that she was proud and vain, and relates in proof

that, one day when she was going to visit some friends in the country, her sister had been told to dress her nicely, but not to give her a frock with short sleeves. Theresa, like a good little girl, did not say anything or show her disappointment; but she thought how much prettier she would look with her arms bare. Another time she tells about, her father called her to come and kiss him. "Papa," she called back, "If you want a kiss you must come for it." She was vain enough to think he would. But he knew how to correct his little queen, and went away without his kiss. This greatly distressed the child, who at once got down from her swing and, shedding bitter tears, ran up stairs to make up with her papa. "I could not bear to think I had grieved my parents," she said, "and instantly acknowledged my faults." A letter written by her mother gives an example of this charming trait in the precious child. "One morning

before going downstairs," it says, " I wanted to kiss little Theresa, who seemed fast asleep. I did not like to wake her, but Marie said, ' Mother, I am sure she is only pretending.' So I was bending down to kiss her forehead when she hid herself beneath the counterpane and said in the tone of a spoiled child, ' I don't like to be seen.' It was not nice of her and I said so. Two minutes later I heard her crying and was surprised to see her downstairs at my side. She had got out of her crib alone, and come to me barefoot, stumbling over her long nightgown as she went. Her tiny face was wet with tears as she knelt down, saying, ' I have been naughty; do forgive me, Mama.' "

From this we see how the dear Little Flower made up to Our Lord whenever she did anything that could displease Him. She was sorry for being naughty. When we are sorry we are sure to be forgiven; for we

are sorry because we love; and if we love,  
Our Lord thinks of nothing else.

Little Theresa, we see, did not allow her faults to grow; then, when she was older, she had very little difficulty in conquering herself. Her will was very good, as may be seen from these words of hers: "If once told not to do a thing I no longer wished to do it. I soon set myself to imitate the good examples around me." And these other words: "I schooled myself not to murmur when any one took what was mine; not to reply when unjustly scolded."

Another of her mother's letters says: "Even Theresa has taken the road to self-denial. Marie has given her sisters strings of beads by which acts of self-conquest may be registered. They have quaint little discussions on religious subjects. 'How can the good God be in so small a Host?' Céline asked the other day. Theresa answered: 'That is nothing to wonder at:

He is almighty.' 'And what does that mean?' 'That He can do all that He likes,' she replied.' "

The sweet, winning disposition of this darling child drew everybody to love her, and she in turn loved everybody. Instead of being harsh and selfish, she was gentle and generous. She shared what ever she had with her sisters and playmates, took delight in giving alms to the poor, and made many little sacrifices in order to give pleasure to others. But, about all her acts of self-denial she was silent. She sacrificed herself in order to please Our Lord, and she did not wish others to know anything about it. She was always pleasant, whether things went her way or not; and every act of politeness she turned into an act of virtue, by the magic of this one word—

For love of Jesus.

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“ O Little Brother, Heavenly King!  
For Thee the cross I gladly bear.  
My only joy is suffering,  
Since thus Thy earthly lot I share.”

*From the poems of the Little Flower.*

Until the Little Flower was four and a half years old, nothing but sunshine and happiness had entered into her life. A dark sad day now dawns. Theresa has lost her mother. Before her baby lips could distinctly frame the words she would say: “Mama, I wish you would die.” When reproved for such a wish, she would explain that it was because she wanted her mother to be where all was bright and beautiful; above all, where Jesus dwelt with His blessed Mother Mary and the Angels.

Two years later when God took her mother to Heaven, it is not probable that Theresa expressed the same wish; for she realized her loss most painfully and became silent and sad. The tenderness of her

father and the affectionate attentions of all around her soothed her in some measure, but could never make her forget the dear mother who had gone to Heaven.

After the death of his wife, Mr. Martin moved his family to Lisieux. Here, Theresa related, she went every day with her father for a walk, which always ended with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

In her new home an occupation in which she greatly delighted was to plant flowers and decorate a shrine in a recess of the garden wall. The little altar in her bedroom was also lovingly adorned with flowers from her garden. It contained an image of God's holy Mother, whom Theresa loved devoutly.

We shall now see how this cherished statue of Our Blessed Lady became dearer than ever to the favored child. Theresa became very ill. For many weeks she suffered, not only racking pains, but a strange

delirium in which she was tortured with indescribable fears. Her father and sisters prayed, and had Masses offered for her, but she daily grew worse; there was no longer any hope of her recovery. At last they had a novena of Masses said for her at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Victories in Paris, to which they united their prayers with very great fervor.

One day as they were kneeling at her bedside (Theresa herself thus relates the occurrence), "they turned towards Our Lady's statue with all the fervor of a mother who begs and insists that her child may live. And their cry of faith took heaven by storm. Knowing that nothing on earth could help me, I was nearly dead with grief. But I also turned towards my Heavenly Mother, begging her with all my heart to have pity on me.

"Suddenly the statue seemed instinct with life. Its face became marvellously, in-

expressibly, divinely beautiful, with a look of ineffable sweetness, compassion, and love; but the greatest charm of all was her enchanting smile.

“ My sufferings were over, all at once, and big tears of exceeding joy at my deliverance fell silently from my eyes. The Blessed Virgin, I said to myself, has drawn near and smiled on me. How happy I am! But I must tell no one, or my happiness would fly from me.

“ And then looking down I at once recognized dear Marie, whose eyes, full of love and emotion, looked into mine with a shrewd guess that I had received some great favor from Heaven. It was to her that I owed that celestial smile; and when she saw me gazing upon the statue she felt certain that I was cured. And so I was. One sunbeam had sufficed to raise up the Little Flower, now delivered forever.”

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“O Jesus, come to me! Rest Thou upon my breast.

Come, come! My spirit longs to have Thee for its Guest.”

*From the poems of the Little Flower.*

“My First Communion! That was a cloudless day for me!” says the Little Flower. Our Holy Father’s decree about Holy Communion for little children would have been a great joy to her; for, at the age of seven, Theresa had a very heavy heart because she could not make her First Communion with her older sister. And, she tells us, she began at once to prepare herself. “One day I heard them say to Céline, that from the time of her First Communion she ought to lead a new life, and I resolved not to wait so long, but to begin at the same time.”

Three years were yet to pass before this longing desire to receive Our Blessed Lord into her heart should be gratified—three

years of loving waiting, loving longing to receive Him; three years of ever begging Him to come to her heart; three years of daily, hourly sacrifices. Then the happiest of days came at last. As the time drew near, that is, within a few months of the great day, she multiplied her acts of sacrifice and love, "which she offered to the Divine Infant, praying that He would transform them into mystic flowers—lilies and roses, violets, daisies, and forget-me-nots. Of these flowers our Blessed Lady was to form a cradle in the heart of Theresa."

Her First Communion Day! What had the Little Flower to say about it? It was so full of joy to her that she could say almost nothing. The next day, however, she tells us, she was sad; and why? Because that day she could not go to Holy Communion. But in a few days she knelt again at the Altar, and, she adds, "after that, my only desire was to receive Holy Communion."

Another happiness was now in store for the Little Flower. "Soon after my First Communion," she says, "I went into retreat again, this time for Confirmation, and with the utmost care made ready my heart for the visit of the Holy Spirit. I could not understand why there should not be a diligent preparation for this sacrament of love. On that day strength to suffer was given me, strength much needed, for a time of great interior trial was drawing near."

We can imagine what fervent thanksgivings were made by the Little Flower, and how we wonder at the great thoughts she had when Jesus was present in her heart. "One day," she says, "I felt, together with a burning desire to suffer, the certainty that many crosses were awaiting me. My soul was then flooded with such consolations as I had never yet enjoyed. Suffering became lovely in my eyes. I also longed to love God alone, and to rejoice in Him solely; and

often during my thanksgiving did I repeat these lines from the *Imitation*: ‘O my God, Who art unspeakable sweetness, make me look upon all carnal comfort as bitter.’”

Of the thoughts that filled her mind in her visits to the Blessed Sacrament, her poems give beautiful examples. Looking fixedly upon the Tabernacle, she would say:

“ O little Key! I envy thee,  
 For thou canst ope at any hour  
 The Eucharistic prison-house,  
 Where dwells the God of Love and Power.

\* \* \*

“ O lamp! within the holy place,  
 Whose mystic lights forever shine!  
 I fain would burn with fires of love  
 As bright, before my God and thine.

\* \* \*

“ O corporal that Angels guard!  
 What envy of thee fills my breast!  
 On thee, as in His swaddling bands,  
 I see my only Treasure rest.

And thy meek Lamb find shelter there.  
Ah! Virgin Mother, change my heart  
Into a corporal pure and fair,  
Whereon the snow-white Host may rest,

“The chalice, too, I fain would be,  
Where I adore the Blood divine;  
Yet at the Holy Sacrifice  
That Precious Blood each day is mine.  
More dear to Jesus is my soul  
Than chalices of gold could be;  
His altar is a Calvary new  
Whereon His Blood still flows for me.”

Our Lord had chosen Theresa apart from thousands to load her with His caresses, to make her feel His love. Many others, no doubt, would be favored in like manner, did they love and prove their love for Jesus, as the Little Flower did.

Her sweet humility caused her to refer everything to God’s infinite goodness; her own unworthiness was always before her eyes. In all her piety and good works she

saw only blemishes, defects of many kinds; and these displeased her so much that she labored constantly to remove them, because she wished her soul to be a pure, beautiful flower to offer to Jesus.

She longed to suffer, to sacrifice herself entirely; and the effort to live purely for no one but Jesus raised her to great holiness. Far from being unhappy when she had sorrows or sufferings, she rejoiced, and would pray, as in the following lines:

“In heaven my life a life of joy shall be,  
The heavy cross shall then be gone for aye.  
Here upon earth in suffering with Thee,  
Lord, let me stay.”

Her prayer was granted in full measure. We have seen something of the trials of her childhood. Sufferings ever-increasing filled the years of her girlhood; and up to the end of her life she ceased not to bear the cross, which for her was always a delight. She

remembered her pains only to be thankful for them, and to offer them to Our Lord in union with His sufferings.

When the Little Flower was a mere babe not more than three years old, even less, she thinks, one of her sisters went to be a Carmelite nun. Theresa said at the time that she too would be a nun; from that day the thought never left her mind. On her First Communion Day she pledged herself to Our Divine Lord to be His forever, if He would deign to accept her, and she felt that He would.

Each year of waiting seemed to grow longer and more wearisome. Though she had a happy home and could enjoy many pleasures, her soul was pining for Carmel. When she was fifteen she determined to enter the Convent without further delay. Her father would not deter her, though to give up his little queen was a great pain to his heart. He felt that Our Lord called her;

so, instead of adding sorrow to her anguished heart, he did all in his power to help her to attain her soul's desire. When the Superior refused to admit her because of her tender age, to soften the child's disappointment he took her traveling. While at Rome he obtained an audience with the Holy Father, Leo XIII, during which Theresa whispered to the Pope that she wished to enter Carmel but could not gain admission because she was too young. If he would give the permission, she would be supremely happy.

Though charmed with the simplicity and piety of the child, the Holy Father referred her back to the Superior; and said words of encouragement, which satisfied her even if she was keenly disappointed.

The beautiful feast of Christmas was the day Little Flower had hoped to enter the cloister. Again she must make the sacrifice. Finally she was promised to be

received after Lent. Of this further delay she says: "Those three months were rich in graces no less than in sufferings. I thought at first I would lead a less strict life, a more self-indulgent life; but God put it into my head to avail myself of the time granted me, and I determined to be more than ever mortified and self-denying. But I do not mean mortified as the Saints were. I have not the courage of those great ascetics, accustomed from their childhood to the greatest austerities. My penance consisted in breaking my will, keeping back a sharp word, doing little services without display, and many other things of that sort. Thus I prepared to become the bride of Jesus, and the delay made me go forward with wonderful swiftness in the way of self-denial, humility, and every other virtue."

In the Convent they called her Sister Theresa of the Infant Jesus and the Holy Face. She was very happy in her new home.

It was not long before her Superiors and companions discovered her rare virtue and charm. And it was not long either before Satan tried to draw her back to the world, on account of the trials she encountered even among those whom she loved so dearly. Her confidence in God, however, was proof against the tempter; every suffering was a sweet bright flower which she offered to her Divine Spouse. She understood well that the happiness of heaven does not belong to earth.

“ My heaven—it is to feel in me some likeness blest  
To Him Who made me and my soul hath reconciled;

My heaven—it is always beneath His eye to rest,  
To call Him Father dear, and be His loving child.”

Another time she wrote:

“ My joy I find in pain and loss,  
I love the thorns that guard the rose;  
With joy I kiss each heavy cross,  
And smile with every tear that flows.”  
\*

Her health, always delicate, soon became very poor. But this gave her no uneasiness. She was now a professed nun at Carmel, and she had no desire for life or death, except as her Divine Spouse willed. While she lived, she said, she wished to "scatter flowers." And then she explains:

"To scatter flowers!—that means each sacrifice,  
My lightest sighs and pains, my heaviest saddest  
hours,

My hopes, my joys, my prayers—I will not count  
the price;

Behold my flowers!

"To scatter flowers!—behold my chosen sword  
For saving sinners' souls, and filling heaven's  
bowers.

The victory is mine; yes, I disarm Thee, Lord,  
With these my flowers.

"To scatter flowers!—that means to speak of Thee,  
My only pleasure here where tears fill all the  
hours;

But soon with Angel hosts, my spirit shall be free  
To scatter flowers."

In other verses we see that Theresa offered herself, not only to bring sinners to repentance but to save the innocent.

“My pains and my joys I offer with delight  
For children’s souls.”

Then in her simple, childlike love she adds:

“Thus to augment Thy ranks of Innocents,  
I ask Thee that a place  
To me be given:  
Grant to me, as to them, Thy kiss,  
O wondrous grace,  
Jesus, in Heaven!”

Another beautiful object for which the Little Flower wished to spend her life, is revealed in the following verse:

“To live of love, O Master dearest, best!—  
It is to beg Thee light Thy holiest fires  
Within the soul of each anointed priest,  
Till he shall feel the Seraphim’s desires;

It is to beg Thee guard Thy Church, O Christ!  
For this I plead with Thee, by night, by day,  
And give myself in sacrifice unpriced  
With love alway."

Our Divine Lord, Who so loved His Little Flower, could not keep her very long upon earth, away from where union with Him would never have interruption. While every moment of her sojourn was an act of resignation to His holy will, every moment was also a desire for Heaven. After she had been about nine years at Carmel, and very near her death, she wrote one night: "O Thou Who, knowing all my littleness, art willing to descend to me, come to my heart, sweet Jesus come! I long for Thee. And by Thy bounty, Lord, send death to me, crowning this grace: Jesus, O hear my cry of love—come to my heart."

Death came to Little Flower after a long illness borne with the same patience and love that had stamped holiness upon her entire

life. Shortly before dying, when asked if she would remember her friends in Heaven, she replied: "After my death I will let fall a shower of roses." And, "I will spend my heaven in doing good upon earth." Another time she said: "The good God will do all my will in heaven, because I have never done my will upon earth."

True to her promise the Little Flower began at once to do good upon earth. All kinds of favors, temporal and spiritual, were granted through her intercession, many seeming to be great miracles; these heavenly favors are what she called "The Shower of Roses."

Oh! you who read these lines, do you not think the Little Flower would give you at least a few petals from her rose garden? Ask her to obtain for you the grace to love Jesus and Mary, and the Angels and Saints as she loved them. Ask her above all things to teach you how to prepare your heart to

receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, and what to say to Him when He comes to be your Guest. Say to Him often, as the Little Flower was wont to say:

“Beauty supreme! My Love Thou art;  
Thyself Thou givest all to me.  
O take my heart, my yearning heart,—  
Make of my life one act of love to Thee.”















